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NOTES
OF
EIGHT YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRALIA

LONDON

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NEW-STREET SQUARE

SOCIAL LIFE AND MANNERS

IN

AUSTRALIA

BEING THE NOTES OF EIGHT YEARS' EXPERIENCE

Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum — Horace

LONDON,

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS

1861

PREFACE.

SHAKSPEARE says, "A good play needs no epilogue." Now, dear reader, I do not mean to say that this little unpretending book is so good that it needs no preface ; but I do think it is quite necessary to explain my reasons for publishing some selections from a diary written during my stay in Victoria. It was as much to please those who are dear to me, as my *own* desire to place before such as are about to emigrate a true picture of the colony which has been my home for many years, and which I do not think is sufficiently appreciated in the mother country.

Perhaps many may think my descriptions too *couleur de rose* ; but if I felt a roseate tint every-

where shining on my path, could I cast shadows where there were none?

Should these pages perchance meet the eyes of any of my Australian friends, may they here see how their unwearied kindness dispelled the clouds which must ever hang over a wanderer so far from home.

London : June 1861.

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SOCIAL LIFE AND MANNERS

IN

AUSTRALIA.

CHAPTER I.

THE PASSAGE OUT.—ARRIVAL AT MELBOURNE.—THE BLACK FOREST.
—LOST IN THE BUSH.—A STATION IN THE BUSH.—FOREST CREEK.
—MY HOME AT THE DIGGINGS.—SUNDAY IN THE CAMP.—MY
FIRST RIDE.—A PLATYPUS SHOT.—DOCTOR C——'S STORY.

I HAVE just come home after some years rambling in Victoria, and it has occurred to me that, having passed there so many happy, merry days, I might be able to comfort some of my fair countrywomen, whose husbands, bent on becoming rich with Australian gold, are breaking up their English homes, and filling the hearts of their devoted and loving wives with dismay and apprehension. So I write just what I have seen and heard; for it would have been a consolation to me in my own perplexity, had I known the true state of things in that far distant land.

From a child I had been a wanderer, so I did not

dread the voyage; yet I embarked strongly biased against the colony, as well as the people I was likely to meet there; and I left it with very warm feelings of admiration for the country, and much love and respect for those I have known there. Here, then, are my experiences, leaves from my journal. My object in publishing them will be fully attained if, by their means, one desponding spirit is cheered, one weary heart lightened of its burden of anxiety.

It was just at the moment when the gold fever was at its height that I was unexpectedly called on to accompany my husband to Melbourne. Disgust, indeed, is not a word strong enough to express my feelings at the moment, particularly as I had to wear a calm face, and not distress loving friends by any ebullition of feeling. A bride of a few weeks, it was really terrible to have my dreams of a summer's pleasant travel so rudely broken; and the thought of banishment, perhaps for years, from all the friends of my youth filled my heart with sorrow. As my Paris trousseau from Madame —— caught my eye, I felt that, at such a time, a few homespun articles would be of more use and value to me than silk and ball dresses; but, my dear lady readers, for your information let me observe, my Paris finery went out quite safely, and I had always the satisfaction of being dressed well and in good taste. I would recommend all who go out to get nothing but

of the best materials, which wear well and look good to the last; for there are ladies and gentlemen in Australia (for aught one may imagine in England) who have taken out with them their home ways, and particularly neatness in their habiliments. Above all things, most requisite for your own comfort and that of your friends are a smiling face, and a firm determination never to look on the shady side of the picture, but to make the very best of every cross, accident, or discomfort; always remembering that it is in our power to lessen such things by our cheerfulness, as well as to add to them by grumbling and discontent. It must not be forgotten that the climate and productions of the new country are so different from ours, that they necessitate a change in habits, which may or may not be pleasing at first; but we soon learn to do as others do; and invariably I have found the people warm-hearted and hospitable to a degree unknown in the mother country; for this reason, as I imagine,—having themselves passed through the fiery ordeal of expatriation and suspense, with the discomforts always attendant on a new life, they are ready to compassionate and lend a helping hand to those who are entering upon the same trials.

Our passage out in one of the clipper ships was an agreeable one. Our captain was a good seaman, and a very gentlemanlike man. We were provided with every comfort, and, what was better still, there was a fair

assemblage of cabin passengers, whose different phases of character it was most amusing to observe during the tedium of a long sea voyage. The young people of the party particularly afforded all on board abundant entertainment; but neither the angry looks of the papas, nor the vigilant watchings of the mammas, prevented two young ladies from getting husbands! One very cleverly ran away during the bustle of landing, and it was some time before her sorrowing family received the certificate of her marriage. The other young lady was more discreet, she obtained the consent of her parents, and a few weeks after, went up the country with her husband, a young dissenting minister, who, poor fellow, seemed very grateful for having a companion on his long journey.

None, but those who have experienced it, can imagine the feeling which pervades all hearts, when the welcome cry of "Land" is heard after many months at sea. All the little evil feelings of envy and jealousy (which, I am sorry to say, do steal in too often among the passengers) are from that moment banished, and nothing is heard on all sides but kind and gentle words. Few left the deck that day, every eye was strained to catch a sight of land, and happy was the person who possessed for a time the captain's excellent glass. Gradually the distant objects unfolded themselves to our impatient vision. Arthur's Seat, Station Point, and Dandonong

Bluff, were the principal objects which attracted notice as we entered the bay of Port Phillip, which is really magnificent, being thirty miles in length. The country, which had been low and unpromising, now assumed a brighter appearance, bringing out some lovely park-like scenery. Here a little steamer came alongside, and took us and our baggage on board. We steamed up the Yarra, and, from the windings of the river, it was some time before we reached the wharf. During this interval we were much pleased with the views, which the twistings of the river varied almost every minute. The foreground, however, was always the same, — a scrubby mud swamp, which in the morning is said to be always enveloped in fog. On landing we were fortunate in procuring a carriage to take us up to the hotel, which we found so extremely expensive that we determined to go up at once to the diggings at Castlemaine. The impression I received of Melbourne at that time was far from satisfactory: swarms of flies, whirlwinds of dust, added to many other discomforts, made me very glad to commence our journey to the diggings, which now, from having left these annoyances behind us, really seemed like a party of pleasure, although it had been my *bête noire* for months. We hired a large spring-cart, with extra springs, on account of the extremely rugged state of the roads. Our start was a novel one to us; we had one horse in the shafts, and another har-

nessed abreast; this is termed an outrigger. We left Melbourne at eight in the morning, driving at a most furious pace; our coachman seemed, however, to understand his horses perfectly; the road was full of ruts and roots, and it required no little art to steer clear of them; he galloped his horses down every steep hill, and whipped them up every ascent, so that before they had time to refuse the formidable heights before them they had nearly reached the summit. Australian driving is nervous work to those unaccustomed to it, and the wonder is how few accidents occur. Our road lay by the Deep Creek; the name is very appropriate, for the descent is so steep that it requires the utmost care to prevent an upset. Being fifteen miles from Melbourne we stopped to have the horses changed. The road hitherto had been extremely disagreeable; now it became wooded, and the gum-trees finer and taller; the bush was covered with lovely flowers of every hue, many I had never seen before. Our next resting-place was Gisbourne, at the foot of Mount Macedon. As we drove up to the inn we met the gold escort: some soldiers of the 40th Regiment, quartered in Melbourne, were boxed up in spring-carts, closely packed, and seemingly unable to move. Their muskets, we were told, were loaded, as they were prepared for an attack from bushrangers. I really pitied the poor men, they looked so uncomfortable; and if the stories be true of their being constantly

pitched out of their carts, the gold escort duty must be anything but pleasure!

I had heard so much of the Black Forest that my fatigue vanished when we entered it, and, indeed, it was unlike anything I had seen before. There was no regularly made road, but many paths branching off in different directions. We wound in and out clumps of lofty gum trees, trying to avoid the fallen gigantic trunks, which frequently presented a most formidable barrier to our progress. These obstacles to anything like rapid travelling enabled me to examine and admire the lovely flowers whose sweet perfume scented the air. The golden flowers of the wattle were mingled with the blossoms of the sarsaparilla, whose tendrils clung to every twig, and long festoons of which hung from branch to branch; coriaria, heathlike flowers with brilliant scarlet bells, and curious orchids formed the carpet of this fairy land. Our admiration and delight were soon turned into dismay: one of those sudden violent storms, which sweep across the forests and plains of this peculiar country, darkened the sky, and soon the rain poured down in torrents. When we reached an open space where many bush-roads branched off in various directions our driver reined in his horses, and confessed he was at a loss which path to pursue. After a long consultation we turned to the right, which we imagined was the direction of Kynton. On we drove for some time without

meeting a soul. At last night came, and we found we should be obliged to "bush it!" As we had never anticipated such a mischance, we were of course quite unprepared for anything of the kind. Fortunately for us, a gentleman, who had been some time in the country, was of the party, and being quite accustomed to this mode of spending the night, he immediately began the preparations for our encampment. By his desire the horses were unharnessed and hobbled, that they might not stray, while a quantity of sticks were collected, and a large fire made. Being the only lady, I was put under the cart, which with cloaks and cushions had been made quite a tent. I was not to be pitied, for I was sheltered from the storm, and my situation was comfortable when compared with that of the gentlemen, who had only the fire for their solace. A tin of biscuits, a few sandwiches, and a bottle of light wine, the remains of our luncheon, did not present a very plentiful or inviting supper to four hungry people. During the whole night the thunder continued unabated, and the vivid flashes of lightning illuminated our solitude, bringing into view the tall gum-trees, some with whitened trunks, others blackened by fire, looking the very ghosts of departed giants. Morning at last broke, lovely and calm; and, strange to say, we felt none of those *aches* which would have been the sure result of a night spent in the open air in England, so genial is the climate of

Australia. On such a balmy morning who could be cross? illtemper or discontent would have jarred so discordantly with the sweet harmony of nature; all was so fresh, and the deep tone of the organ bird fell distinctly on the ear as it poured forth its matin hymn of praise. This bird is a species of kingfisher, and is often called the settlers' clock, from its peculiar manner of proclaiming the dawn and close of day.

We decided on sending the driver with one of the horses to discover the right road; in half an hour he returned with the welcome intelligence that he had found a station, and that the owner, taking compassion on our forlorn condition, had invited us to breakfast. On our way thither we caught a glimpse of Mount Macedon, towering three thousand feet above us, covered with open forests, its summit hid in the morning mist. When at length we reached the station, our delight could hardly be expressed on finding that the gentleman who came forward so kindly to receive us was our old acquaintance, Mr. ——. He quickly called his wife, telling her that friends had arrived from "the old country." After a thousand questions had been asked and answered, I gladly accompanied Mrs. — to a bedroom, off which was a bathroom, so that in a short time I was most comfortably prepared to partake of the delicious breakfast which was set before us—omelettes, potted meats, and mutton chops constituting a

most substantial meal for us, starved mortals. The house, or rather cottage ornée, by which name it would have been called in England, was a wooden one, with a very wide verandah surrounding it, on which were trained luxuriant roses, and the passion flower, then in full fruit, its golden balls mixing in singular harmony with the blossoms of some native creepers, among which the beautiful Moreton Bay bignonia especially claimed our attention. The dining and drawing-rooms were large, and occupied the centre of the house; the bedrooms, five or six in number, were on either side, and the store room at the back. The kitchen was detached, as well as the dairy, which was in a large hut with two shelving roofs and projecting eaves, one a foot above the other, allowing a current of air to pass freely between them, by which means the large room was kept perfectly cool. The shelves round the apartment held nearly a hundred cheeses, and the milk pans were as dainty as in the best English dairy. The greatest trouble seems to be in milking, for many of the cows are so wild and wicked, that it is most difficult to manage them; and we saw in the milking yard various means resorted to in order that they might be induced to give their milk quietly, a kind of pillory for the very restive ones, and lumps of rock salt for the more gentle. Even under the most favourable circumstances, the same number of cows would take four times longer to

milk *here* than they would at home. Pigs and quantities of beautiful fowls were in the yard, fattening, without trouble, on the skim milk and whey. The garden was the next place we visited; it called forth expressions of astonishment and pleasure, for almost every vegetable and fruit grown in England was flourishing here most luxuriantly. We were told that no indigenous fruits of any value had been found either in the forests or plains of this most peculiar country. The land had a very parklike appearance; the gum-trees, taking the different forms of the English oak and elm, grew in natural clumps; the golden wattles were in full bloom, and groups of trees were dotted about as picturesquely as if planted by the hand of a skilful gardener. The light-wood tree, resembling the evergreen oak, was pointed out to us. It is said that where this tree flourishes the soil must be good. The paddock was kept exclusively for the horses; we saw some beautiful Arabs, almost in their wild state. Inferior horses are not bred here. Some very fine cattle were waiting to be driven down to Melbourne for sale, and the drays which accompanied them would return with the stock of groceries and whatever else might be wanted for the half year's consumption. We quite rejoiced at the thriving prosperity of our friends.

All is romance in this most romantic land. People do not progress at home as they do here, nor have they any idea of the way in which a rapid fortune is made in

Australia. Our hosts are examples of what can be done by young people of active energetic habits. They came out resolved to succeed, and yet in the eyes of the world, they seemed the most unlikely persons to bear the brunt of toil and expatriation. Both were well born, and accustomed to every luxury which a high position in an English county ever commands. They were playfellows in childhood, and lovers in youth, but their parents wisely forbade all idea of marriage, as he was a younger son with a younger son's scanty portion, and she could not hope for much more on her side. They pleaded for time, and the relations, touched by their earnestness, granted two years, hoping that time would bring wisdom. The young lovers, nothing daunted, arranged their plans for emigration, and began fitting themselves for this important step. He was a man full of expedients and of great physical and mental activity: as an officer he had visited most of the colonies, and now he set himself to learn in good earnest all he thought would be useful in his new life, even to shoeing horses. She, on her part, was not idle—the housekeeper's room, the dairy, and the laundry were daily visited, and she soon made herself mistress of their mysteries; nor was dressmaking forgotten. The two years thus passed; a reluctant consent to their marriage was given them; he sold his commission in the army, and with very little money and many

letters from great people they arrived in Melbourne. Refusing to enter into society or any gaiety whatever, they were fortunately able to meet with a station suited to their means, and without loss of time entered upon their new life. Their anxiety to pay off part of the purchase-money never allowed them to indulge in show, nor in useless luxuries; strict economy without the least parsimony was practised until they felt themselves free. From his military habits he was able to lead and control his labouring men, never sparing himself when difficulties arose. Ever considerate and firm, his general information and talent, added to cheerfulness and good temper, soon made him the oracle of the little world about him. She, in her own quiet way, put in practice her little home accomplishments. The maid-servants she hired were soon made useful, for she had learned how to direct; at the same time she never lost her early ladylike habits in her humble home duties, nor was she ever above doing what was necessary. She told me that, when the gold was first discovered, the house servants ran away in a body, and for a week she had to cook the dinner for the farm labourers.

With regret we left our friends, and set off again on our travels, our spring-cart stored with a large hamper of good things in case of another misadventure. We reached Forest Creek in safety and not at all tired.

It is wonderful what fatigue one can undergo in this climate; what would kill a lady in England is here only pleasant exercise.

On entering the diggings, the country has the appearance of one vast cemetery with fresh made graves, as the diggers leave their holes uncovered with the earth heaped up at the sides. The road to Castlemaine is bordered by these unpleasant-looking excavations. Tents were then the only dwelling-places in what is now called the township of Castlemaine. We were kindly received and put up for the night by some friends, to whom our arrival must have been a serious inconvenience, yet we were never allowed to perceive anything of the kind. Their tent was a large one and contained a stove, the pipe of which conveyed away the smoke through a hole in the top of the tent. A small tent joined to the larger one was used as a kitchen, and had a fireplace built with mud and stone. A good sized table and three sofas were the principal furniture of the large tent. These sofas I found were to be our beds at night, and very comfortable the one I occupied was; the lady and her little girl slept on the others, whilst the gentlemen found accommodation for themselves in some of the neighbouring tents. Our establishment had been the topic of conversation during the evening. So many difficulties had been brought forward that I began to feel a little nervous on the subject. However,

Mrs. S. at last recollected a poor widow, who had come to her not long before begging for employment, as she was left totally destitute, having just lost her husband, who died mad from hard work and disappointment. She had turned from all suitors, and only desired to earn money enough to reach Melbourne and home. I was touched with her sad story, and asked Mrs. S. to send for her. The next morning she came, and my surprise equalled my delight as a well-known voice exclaimed, "Oh! don't you know me, Miss?" She had been the petted and trusted maid of a near neighbour of my parents, when we were in the West Indies, and had grieved her mistress by falling in love with a handsome sergeant in the —th regiment, and marrying him. Knowing her antecedents, I was only too happy to engage her at once. For both parties the meeting was a most fortunate one; for in her I had a faithful and most excellent maid, and she, in meeting with one who had known her in her better days, had regained her self-respect.

With her help, and she was a host in herself, being up to all digger contrivances, our tent was soon pitched and arranged in the most approved fashion, and I now look back with a smile at my feelings of pride on seeing my first home so nice and comfortable, though it was but a tent. I am not *very* old, but I have lived long enough to know that happiness does not consist either

in living in a palace or a tent. Loving eyes and smiling lips are sunbeams everywhere.

The next day being Sunday, we walked to the government camp, where divine service was performed by a clergyman of the Church of England. Sunday in a far-off land always brings to me thoughts of home and the loved ones there, the dear old church and chiming bells. It is a sweet reflection that we are all using the same form in prayer, and that our noble liturgy does not forget those "that travel by land or by water;" and above all, that our God is everywhere, and a *sun* and *shield* to those who trust in him. The service was held in a building formed of thin planks, with a *canvass* roof; benches were placed in rows, and the clergyman's bed made into a sofa. The congregation was respectable, numerous, and attentive; the service was conducted in an impressive manner, and the sermon proved that the preacher was a man who felt he was responsible for the souls entrusted to his keeping, and who faithfully performed his mission.

After an early dinner we walked to Campbell's Flat. The quiet of the camp astonished us; gold seemed to have lost its magnetism on this day, and in many of the tents service was being performed by ministers of different denominations; all seemed to remember that the day was a holy one. A very large tent attracted our attention; it was fitted to contain some hundred

persons; it was a Wesleyan chapel. Numbers of the preachers of this sect, zealously endeavouring to impress the minds of this mixed multitude, are seen everywhere. There was something very touching in the hum of voices in prayer floating on the breeze, with the swelling and falling of the hymn tune so familiar to our childhood: the beautiful one of "Jerusalem," which was wafted to us in subdued harmony, brought tears into my eyes. Who ever dreams in England that there is even the semblance of religion in the gold fields? and yet amongst rough men, supposed to be the very scum of the earth, we found the Sunday more rigidly kept than in many far more civilised places. My last Sunday in England was spent in London, and the contrast between our walk from Pimlico to Westminster Abbey, and that to the government camp, was very striking. Here religion is really respected, clergymen treated with reverence, and places of worship well attended; from which it would seem that sudden prosperity has in many cases the same effect on men's minds as adversity — that of bringing them to consider whose Hand it is which bestows or withholds.

The term *Creek*, which so often occurs in connection with the gold diggings, merely means a small stream falling into a larger river. The diggings of Forest Creek extended over a surface of twenty miles, and contained nearly fifteen thousand persons. The pale,

anxious, haggard appearance of most of the men, tell how dearly-bought is the coveted gold. The tents are mostly made of cotton, not sufficiently thick to keep out the rain, which often pours down in torrents, nor the scorching sun, which burns up all within. Swarms of horrid flies, peculiar to the country, alight everywhere, leaving their disgusting traces behind them, and destroying everything eatable. Few of the diggers have beds; a blanket on the bare ground, swarming with fleas, is their only resting-place after a hard day's toil. Is it surprising then that few are able to sustain for any length of time such discomforts, when added, as they are, to the want of nourishing food? Money absorbs every thought, every heart, in this strange camp; even cats are articles of commerce, and almost as profitable to their owners as Whittington's far-famed pet; a sovereign is freely given for a young kitten, as rats and mice abound. The grog shops are the favourite mode of making money, and lamentable to relate, many gentlemen, whose birth and education would entitle them to respect and consideration, eagerly engage in this most hateful traffic.

Soon after we were settled in our tent-home at Castlemaine we received an invitation to tea. The party was numerous; the tent, one of the largest in the camp, was lined with green baize; one end of it was fitted up with sofas, arm-chairs, and a grand piano.

Small round tables were tastefully dispersed, on which some very pretty ornaments, books, and portfolios of drawings were placed. At the other end there was a large table with cups and saucers of every size and pattern, a large mud and stone fireplace, with a blazing fire, on which two immense kettles were singing. Loaded pistols decorated the mantelpiece. The ladies—for ladies they were in every sense of the word—were well-dressed, some even elegantly, in the newest fashions. After tea had been disposed of, and the things taken away, we had some good vocal and instrumental music, and for a time forgot we were in the land of diggers. The *race-game* collected us round the table on which tea had been served, and we ended a merry meeting by an appointment to ride to Fryer's Creek the next day.

The morning brought with it that glorious blue sky and balmy air so peculiar to this country, which made our early start most enjoyable. We were a large party, all well mounted, for no one here ever thinks of riding a badly bred horse. I was particularly fortunate, for Dr. C——, whose acquaintance I had only made since my arrival, placed a very well-bred mare at my disposal, and added moreover to that kindness by inviting me to accompany his wife and himself in their rides whenever my husband was occupied with his affairs. The road was at first uninteresting; but we were a joyous party,

and beguiled the way by many a good-natured quiz and joke, for we all had our pet crotchet to carry out, and it was laughable to observe how each unconsciously strove to make *it* the prominent feature of the ride. The kind doctor had a patient to visit; his young wife had eyes only for ferns; a new-comer, fresh from England, was off his horse every five minutes, fancying he was riding over nuggets; but the most troublesome of all was a gentleman whose taste was for collecting and stuffing birds, for we were constantly startled by the report of his gun, and he scared away the birds I was so anxious to see. *My* fancy was a good gallop, and *that* I did not enjoy comfortably, for I found the paces of the horse upon which I was mounted so different from those of the trained horses I had been in the habit of riding, that for the first time in my life I felt nervous; the deer-like bounding of the animal, and the very, very rough riding, (for we were not going over macadamised roads, but leaping over fallen trunks of trees, and every obstacle in fact that came in our way,) was at first, to say the least of it, disagreeable. It was my first lesson in Australian riding, and the only time that it did not give me unmixed pleasure. We stopped for luncheon at the station belonging to the doctor's patient. It was situated in such an out of the way spot that we were astonished at the spread of good things which were placed before us at a moment's notice. The potted

salmon and lobster cutlets we devoured with considerable gusto; nor was less justice done to our host's sparkling champagne. But I must describe our hospitable entertainer. He was a tall, dark, handsome man, with a careworn face, and looked as if tented fields and the trumpet's sound had been more congenial to him than a squatter's life. The lady we did not see. As we were riding away the doctor promised, in answer to my question, to give me the history of his early life, "which," he said, "was a mistake."

When we got to the banks of the Lodder, and halted on the hill over the river, the view which presented itself was of a most remarkable character, giving one the idea of a very mountainous country. Barren, stony hills, whose hard profile stood out against the azure sky in bold relief; villages of tents dotted about, and diggers' holes thickly covering the ground. These bald hills are amongst the most singular features in Australian scenery: they are overspread with large boulders, and often a single tree is the only sign they give of vegetation. At this spot our bird-collecting friend got into our good graces by riding up to tell us that he had shot a *platypus*! We quickly crowded round him to behold this wonder. The little animal measured twelve inches; it had the fur and form of an otter, with the bill of a duck; it is aquatic, and so rarely seen or shot that its habits are not known. *Ornithorhynchus* is its

proper appellation. Fryer's Creek is said to be infested by the most lawless set of diggers in the colony. Scarcely a day passes without a murder or a robbery. We returned home however unmolested, and well pleased with our twenty miles' ride.

According to promise the doctor gave me, on our return, the story of his friend, which I shall endeavour to write in his own words.

DOCTOR C——'s STORY.

“ Adjoining my father's place in the south of England, was the beautiful domain of Sir William F——. He had two sons, who were my fast friends. William, the eldest, was far handsomer than his brother Henry. Tall, manly, with large dark grey eyes, fringed with long black lashes, and an ever varying expression, which greatly added to the beauty of a naturally handsome countenance, he was certainly formed to be the pride of any father's heart, whilst his frank and generous disposition, which endeared him so much to the tenantry, made him the idol of his fond parent. Unhappily he was self-willed in no common degree. His mother, Lady F., died when he and his brother were quite children, and they were left to the care of their old nurse, who had lived nearly half a century in the family. The kind old woman loved them, indeed, ‘not wisely, but too well;’ she devoted herself in her own way to the happi-

ness of the motherless little ones; and, as she never refused them anything, they naturally grew up in the indulgence of every whim, till self-denial was as unpractised by them as contradiction was unfelt. Sir William, soon after the death of his wife, went abroad for some time, until he had somewhat recovered the shock of her death. When he returned he found it was evidently quite time to think about his boys' education: the eldest, accordingly, went to Eton, and Henry to Addiscombe, preparatory for a writership in India.

“What happy hours those of our childhood were, when, after lessons, and in the holidays, we were allowed to play together, my sister and myself, with the young F——s, under the spreading oaks and sycamores of Heathfield Park! We were then often joined by our rector's daughters,—such beautiful girls! Then what pleasant rides we used to have together! Each taking our lunch strapped on our ponies' backs, we would go to the banks of a beautiful stream, and beguile the time by reading or fishing, until the declining sun warned us to return. Clara, the youngest daughter of our rector, was a very beautiful creature; her black silken hair shaded a brow more purely white than painter ever imagined; her eyes were of that deep blue so seldom seen, but whose beauty is felt rather than admired; whilst in her clear, ingenuous young face every passing thought was visible; for what had she to conceal? Her heightened colour and

downcast eye when William was near her, only told of what amongst ourselves was an acknowledged fact; so much so, indeed, that we never thought, when *he* was there, of paying any attentions to William's 'little wife,' as he always called her; his place in our rides and walks was at her side, and was always yielded to him as his right. I think I see her now, cantering on her dark bay pony, curbing his vivacious gambols with such grace! Her long black curls floating in the wind, her eyes dancing with delight, and her lovely face tinged with the bloom of the most delicate rose leaf; her musical laugh making the old woods ring again. The riding hat with the long drooping feather, and the exquisitely-fitting light riding habit, made a picture which never could be forgotten. We often had long consultations as to the way and time William was to ask his father's consent to his engagement; we rather dreaded it, for, though fond of his son, and quite petting the pretty Clara, Sir William was a stern man, and we imagined he had higher views for William from some words he had spoken. However, as William was to leave Eton shortly, it was thought better to wait till his final return home. In the mean time Sir William seemed much taken up with some people who came on a visit — a gentleman who, with his wife and daughter had lately returned from India, with fabulous wealth. The young lady was too delicate and indolent to join us

in our rides, so we saw but little of her; her father was a very old and attached friend of Sir William's, and as we afterwards found they had made a compact that their children should marry. On William's return from Eton his father told him his wishes and the absolute necessity of keeping intact his promise. The unfortunate boy was in despair; he confessed his love and engagement to Clara and his determination to marry her. Sir William's anger may be better imagined than described; he swore by the most solemn oath that, unless his son obeyed his wishes and commands by marrying his friend's child, or at least endeavoured to attach himself to her, and promised to give up Clara, he would never see his face again. Three days were given to William to consider the matter. After this scene the passionate, self-willed boy rushed to the stables, and thence galloped to the rectory, where he related the whole story. Clara was in despair, but her father, though deeply grieved for the sorrow which had so suddenly fallen on those two young hearts, did not shrink from his duty, but told them at once that he could never sanction an engagement which Sir William had forbidden; and vainly tried to soothe and bring back to reason his excited young friend; but all his efforts were vain, for William in his fury so far forgot himself as even to treat his aged friend with such disrespect, that the latter was obliged to insist on his leaving the

house, and not attempting to see his daughter again. At the end of three days Sir William sent for his son. The interview was a short one. William told his father that it was impossible for him to marry any one but Clara. His defiant air blanched the old man's face, for he had hoped his son's resistance would have been as short as it was furious; but now in an unsteady voice he told his rebellious child that his oath must be kept, and that they never would meet more on earth. Drawing himself up, he gazed into his son's eyes as if awaiting some sign of emotion; then turned and left the room.

"That night two homes were desolate; Clara and William had fled — how, we never knew, as they had concealed their plans from every one; a short time after a letter from William to his brother announced their marriage in London, and the receipt of a thousand pounds from his father's lawyer, with the understanding that he was never to expect anything more from his father. My sister had a note from Clara, but as my father strongly objected to any correspondence, we heard no more of her until, to my delight and astonishment, I met her here at the bedside of her sick child, whom I had been called in to attend. After their marriage they had embarked for Melbourne, and leaving Clara there, Mr. F — went immediately to the bush, and with an experienced bushman soon constructed a habitation sufficiently comfortable to bring his wife to. Then he bought

cattle and fattened them, and so by thrift and economy they have become well-off settlers, having now every comfort and luxury. Two beautiful boys and one little girl enliven their home.

“Some months ago they heard that Sir William was dead, and Henry entreated his brother to return to his old home. Clara has her doubts as to whether she shall not miss the free and independent life of an Australian squatter, the pleasant rides on boundless plains, the beautiful scenery, and the hospitable and friendly people of the colony, rightly called *Australia Felix*.”

CHAP. II.

QUARTZ HILL. — A NUGGET FOUND! — DEATH IN THE BUSH. —
TARRENGOWER. — PURSUED BY BUSHRANGERS. — CHOOSING THE
WEDDING DRESS. — ADELAIDE C——. — ADELAIDE'S STORY.

THE doctor one morning called for us to ride with him to Quartz Hill, to get some specimens of gold and see the diggers' holes. As we quietly sauntered along, admiring the lovely scenery, loud ringing shouts were heard that were unmistakably sounds of joy. "These fellows have found something good," said the doctor; "let us make haste and see the fun." Accordingly, putting our horses to their utmost speed, we were in a few minutes in the midst of a crowd of diggers, whose burlesque costumes presented a most ludicrous appearance: dirty finery and rags were worn together in the most fantastic fashion; unwashed, unkempt, and begrimed with dirt, forty of them were huddled together, alternately shouting, yelling, and congratulating a man, who half sat, half melted on the ground, his trembling hand resting on the glittering mass before him. It was the largest nugget which had yet been found there. His fortune was made,

his anxieties ended : yet he was very passive, seeming not to understand all that was passing before him. He evidently could not realise it ; his face was deadly pale, but its varying expression revealed the strong emotion passing within. His tattered and soiled garments, hollow cheek, and wasted form plainly told that it was only at the eleventh hour succour had come. Nor did he heed the kind endeavours of his fellows to arouse him. One of them, recognising our friend, called out, "Give him a taste of your flask, Doctor ; maybe that will set him to rights." The kind doctor's hand was in his pocket in a moment, and the contents of the flask served out to the dreaming man ; who, suddenly looking up, and pushing it away slowly said, "Never again ! may God keep me from it, and may my future life show my thanks to the God who has saved me." Just then a rude litter was carried past, the bearers loudly calling for the doctor ; a man had been crushed in a hole, and they were taking him to the hospital. My husband and I rode on alone to the hole belonging to the digger from whom we intended to purchase specimens. It was situated on the top of the hill ; the largest excavation was fifty-seven feet deep, and was surrounded by many smaller holes, his party having undermined the ground and connected them. The labour he described as most toilsome, but of that they did not complain, for "it paid well."

Continuing our ride, we had not gone much more than

a mile when my horse suddenly started. We were in such earnest conversation that I had not for some time observed what was passing; but now, on looking up to see the cause, we perceived a man lying on the ground under the shade of a gum-tree, feebly moaning, as if to attract our attention. In a moment my husband dismounted, and found that the poor youth, for such he was, was evidently dying; whilst, therefore, I endeavoured to pour down his throat the contents of the doctor's flask, my husband galloped back to the nearest working party for assistance. The brandy revived the poor fellow; he opened his eyes, and seeing me, he gasped out, "Oh Alice! you have come at last; I have waited so long." Not wishing to dispel the evidently pleasing delusion, I endeavoured to cheer him, telling him aid was near; at the same time begging of him to say who his friends were, that I might convey to them his wishes. But I soon saw he was sinking fast; starvation had done its work too well; so, kneeling beside him, I slowly and softly repeated comforting words from the book of eternal life. A smile came over the haggard face as he looked his gratitude; then the grey tint of death overshadowed it, and I felt I was alone with the dead. As long as exertion was needed I did not feel the fearful position in which I was placed; but now the awful silence of the vast solitude was most appalling, so still and calm was all around; not even a leaf on the

gigantic tree stirred; it seemed as if all sound had been hushed by the passing over of the shadow of death. I endeavoured to rouse myself, and shake off the indescribable feeling which possessed me, by endeavouring to call to mind the disconnected words of him whose spirit had but just passed away, hoping some clue might be gained to his family. The *Alice*, where was she now? how employed, while the loving heart that so worshipped her was hushed in death? and the mother who had often yearned for her boy whose face she was never to kiss again!—what anxiety they must be feeling now, and what a terrible ending to it awaited them, when they should hear that, after days of wandering and starvation he had laid himself down at last, homeless and sick, to die in a wilderness far from the haunts of men. It is painful to dwell on all he must have endured; but our Heavenly Father's ways are not our ways. He in His mercy may have thus ordered his lonely end as to give this prodigal son time to think over the past, time to repent and find mercy through the Saviour. Surely his mother's prayers had reached the throne of grace, and had thus been answered, though not as she may have hoped. Was it not better that by lingering and suffering he should be brought to repentance and saved, than have lived in worldly prosperity and have been lost? Such were my feelings as I watched my husband returning across the plain, with our kind friend the doctor and two or three

men. I did not feel lonely now, and it was with real *sorrow that I took a last look at the cold form over which I had kept my silent watch, and slowly accompanied my husband from the spot.*

In our rides and walks we were all obliged to wear veils, for the dust on the roads was excessive; it seemed ridiculous for gentlemen to use them, but they found themselves compelled to do so, as it is necessary to protect the eyes from the flies as well as the dust. There is a little insect which has the greatest fancy for flying direct into the eye (which seems to attract it as a candle does a moth), and this gives what is called the "eye blight," which is very disfiguring. The eyelid becomes violently inflamed and swollen with a strong itching sensation. But it is not so dangerous as the "sandy blight," for then the inflammation is accompanied by burning pain, often producing fever from extreme suffering. It seems to be a kind of ophthalmia, in which indeed it frequently ends. The only thing we found to prevent these blights was, bathing the eyes on rising in the morning with the coldest water that could be had; and if the eyes seemed inflamed after a ride in the sun, using Goulard water: from this we derived the greatest benefit. Finding our gauze veils very uncomfortable and warm, we thought that fine netted ones would keep off the flies equally well, whilst they would not so much exclude the air; so we sent to Melbourne by one of the officers of the gold

escort, who always kindly undertook to execute any *little commissions for us, for small meshes, netting needles and dark blue and drab netting silk, which in a very short time we converted into veils, pronounced by all to be pretty, useful, and most comfortable. The blue were at first the favourites, but the sober drab never lost its colour, and was much the most serviceable. In the West Indies I have seen small masks of very fine white linen worn both by gentlemen and ladies, but nothing, in our opinion at least, could exceed the excellence of our own invention, which we proved a few days after during a long ride to Tarren-gower, a distance of sixteen long miles and back. We started soon after eleven o'clock, and got there before one. On our arrival, we were so covered with dust as to be as white as millers; our habits had to be well switched before they showed any signs of their original colour. When we begged for water to bathe our faces, we were astonished at being told that it was a scarce and expensive luxury, and had to be brought from a long distance; and, indeed, some which was at last brought to us looked so dirty that nothing would have induced me to wash my face, or even hands, in it, but the woman's repeated assurance that it was perfectly clean; even the water given us to drink was a chalybeate, so strongly impregnated with iron as to be most distasteful. Notwithstanding these little annoyances, we*

did justice to an excellent dinner, and tasted *shandy-gaff* for the first time. This curious beverage is made of pale-ale and ginger-beer.

The diggings called Tarrengower are situated on Bryant's range, and as we went along we picked up some very beautiful specimens. But the sufferings of the diggers here must have far exceeded anything we had yet witnessed; they seemed wretchedly off, for, added to the want of wholesome water, the dust invariably gave them sore eyes, and they were a sickly, miserable looking set. Yet, such is the intense love of gold in their hearts, that they willingly stay on, unheeding the many around them that daily sink under disease and privation, forgetting that their own turn may come next. That their miseries harass, and sometimes make them savage, we had proof, as we rode along, in the horrid spectacle of a man tied up to a tree and shrieking under the blows they were inflicting upon him for thieving, as we were told. This was the climax to the miseries we had witnessed in this place, and as we galloped home we congratulated ourselves that Castlemaine would seem a paradise after this day's ride. How often we are disposed to underrate the blessings we daily enjoy, till some striking suffering in others calls up our gratitude for the difference in our own lot; and even then, alas! how transient are our impressions!

As we rode along we were often obliged to walk our horses carefully over patches of ground so thickly

covered with mushrooms as to be dangerously slippery. We were still riding slowly, admiring the effect of an exquisite moonlight on the landscape, though fortunately we had just reached a good cantering path, when we remarked that three horsemen, whom we had seen at some distance before, were now following us in a very suspicious manner. As they gained upon us very fast, and at last called on us to stop, we thought discretion, in this case, would be the best part of valour, particularly as none of the party were armed; so, simultaneously putting our horses into a gallop, and being all superbly mounted, we soon distanced our pursuers, who, however, did not give up the chase until the lights of the township glimmered in the distance. Thus we were saved from a most disagreeable adventure; for, as horse-stealing is the fashionable crime here, we should undoubtedly have had to complete our journey on foot. Never shall I forget what I felt when we were once more safe amongst the tents of our friendly diggers!

I was very much amused one day by a visit to the township for the purpose of shopping—a street of shops in tents is such a novel sight! Some active gentlemen have erected wooden stores, and a few, still more ambitious, have added the luxury of glazed windows. An attempt at a square was being made near the Post-office, from whence all conveyances start for Melbourne, and which is rendered still more bustling by the market

which is held here. I should be very much puzzled to say what was *not* exposed for sale at this place; amongst other things I noticed horses and carts, cabbages, potatoes, and wearing apparel. The stores were astonishingly well stocked with everything that could be wanted, but, as may be imagined, the prices were very high. Some of the proprietors were London people, who had their own goods sent out, and these made the most conspicuous display of dresses, bonnets, and quantities of china.

I was in one of the shops, making a few purchases, when a lucky digger came in, with his intended bride, to buy the wedding dress. I became interested in them immediately, from their bright joyous faces, whilst imagination pictured them as lovers from the "old country." She was one of those tall, handsome Irish girls one often meets in that little isle of the west; her large grey eyes were shaded by long black lashes; she had dark brown hair, a peculiarly oval face, dimpled cheeks, and a little rosy mouth with pearl-like teeth,—one of nature's own nobility. At first she seemed dazzled with the finery displayed before her; but, with a woman's instinct, she caught the hints which the clever and experienced shopman endeavoured gently to insinuate, and, seemingly self-possessed, allowed herself to be guided in her choice as to what would be most advisable. Silk stockings, satin shoes, and undergarments were

soon disposed of; but the selection of the bonnet, dress, and shawl was most perplexing. Two dresses from the heaped counter were placed side by side; magnificent dinner dresses they were; one an Albert blue, brocaded with white, and flounced, the other a lovely green; the lover preferred the green, but when she gently reminded him that it was the "fairies' colour, and unlucky," the blue was chosen, with a maize crêpe bonnet and feathers, and a crimson velvet mantle. All this I saw with a sigh, for evidently my beauty would soon be converted into a vulgar, ordinary looking girl, as she could not even put on her finery properly. Once, in her *embarras de richesses*, she turned to me, and said, "May be your honour would tell me which is the prettiest." I advised quieter colours. "Ay, sure, they'd be more to my likin' too," she replied; "but it's *him* as wants me to be grand, and sure he pays for it." He was so generous, and she so grateful, that if they can only resist the temptations which they will have to encounter in the mad jollity and drunken revelry always attending a digger's wedding, they bid fair to be a happy couple. Alas! for poor human nature, most of the wives in the camp exhibit on their faces the brutal marks of their husbands' fists! Many of the diggers have reduced themselves to mere savages from the effects of drink, to which they are tempted by disappointment to resort, in order to drown care, as they imagine, poor creatures!

Hence drunkenness and all its concomitant evils are terribly prevalent at the diggings, and gin-palaces are there the most profitable of all speculations.

One evening, when I was occupied in finishing some sketches, my maid came in with a note, which a child, she said, had just brought. As I glanced at the writing, which was peculiarly delicate and ladylike, though evidently traced by a feeble hand, a host of recollections, visions of bright happy childhood, passed before me. Surely I could never mistake the writing of one I had known so well, who had been so loved and admired by the brilliant circle in which she moved? But yet, how could it be! Adelaide C—— *here!* and that little ragged girl her maid! Impossible. These thoughts rapidly crossed my mind while I opened the note, and, with eyes blinded by tears, read a touching appeal from my former playfellow to come to her, for she was alone, and dying. "Will you only remember past days," she pleaded, "and forget all beside?" Hastily thrusting the note into my pocket I rose to go at once, and, too much excited for reflection, followed the little girl, who led me to a tent which showed at a glance that it had once contained many comforts. But one object alone I sought. On a mattress lay the attenuated figure of a young woman, hardly indeed past girlhood; her long and thick black hair was loose, and fell over her bosom like a veil, framing, as it were, her pale face, calm and

still in its glorious beauty; her large black eyes were raised as if seeking for comfort where only true peace can be found; the little white hands were joined closely as if to add fervency to the prayer. It was truly a most touching picture, one a painter could have gazed upon for ever!

The bright, happy smile which welcomed me, as I knelt and kissed her, died away, and the look of mingled shame and anguish which met mine I never, never can forget. That glance told me all. *She* was then the lady whom the leading people of the camp had contemptuously spurned, for presuming to mix with them. Poor Adelaide! Her lot had been a hard one before, but now the last bitter drop was poured into her cup, and well for her was it that her hours were numbered.

Bit by bit the sad story of her young life was told. Her repentance was deep and heartfelt; she never shut her eyes to her sin, which had loaded her conscience as a heavy chain, from which death alone could free her; and now her release was near. She bowed with quiet submission to the justice of her punishment; even under cruel desertion no murmur ever escaped her lips. "I have more than deserved it," was all she said. The clergyman, to whom she had long before confessed her guilt and sorrow, was unremitting in his prayers with her and for her, and the message of mercy and comfort

which he brought was not in vain : her end was peace. One request she made, and I have herèby endeavoured to fulfil it : it was, that, concealing her name, I should tell her sad story far and wide, in the hope that others, as sorely tried as she was, might profit by her dearly-bought experience, and not rush without warning upon a course, the full misery of which can never be known until too late. I only wish that any misled girl, who is ever tempted to take so awful a step, could have witnessed with me that wreck of all that had been once beautiful and happy. What struck me especially was, not so much the wasted and careworn face, as the expression of intense mental suffering which remained on the earthly tenement, even after the spirit had winged its joyous flight, and was tasting its first draught of eternal bliss.

When first I saw Adelaide, she was a very young girl, living with her widowed father, who was a person of consequence and influence in one of the colonies. Very beautiful, talented, and fascinating, she won all hearts, but not principally by these rare gifts ; it was her goodness that attracted : thoroughly unselfish, an unkind word never passed her lips ; she was a sunbeam in every house she entered. Her devotion to her old father was such that for his sake she laughed off all her suitors, declaring she never intended to marry. At length, the most marked attentions were paid to her by

one whose apparently noble qualities won her young heart; his every act and look spoke of devotion and love, yet no *word* was said. Poor Adelaide, with no mother to warn her of her danger, yielded her mind to the too delightful influence, never doubting the truth of an affection which seemed so real. Her father, meanwhile, blind to what was passing, entreated her to marry a man of his own choosing, for, finding his health failing, he dreaded leaving his only child unprotected. Her love was unspoken and unsuspected; she consented to her father's wishes, for she thought, in her maidenly pride, that she would crush all recollection of one who had sought her love, as she now saw, merely to gratify his vanity. The marriage took place; the serpent stood by, feeling his power in the varying changes of the young girl's face. However, she conquered, as she thought, this early preference (perhaps his absence assisted her so to do, for he went away shortly after her marriage); and a year was passed in making the man she had married happy. But a dark cloud was hanging over her, and in the second year of her married life it fell, enveloping her in its ill-omened gloom. Her father died; and as he did not leave her the wealth expected by her husband, the latter began to treat her harshly and cruelly, even traducing in her presence the memory of her loved father. And was this the reward of all her self-devotion? Was this the lot she was

calmly to endure till death freed her from it? In this dark hour the tempter came with his soft words, luring the poor afflicted one to trust once more to his love and devotion. She listened, wavered, and at last fled with him from her husband's roof, for ever! The happiness she sought she never found; her father's pale face followed her like an accusing spirit. For a short time she fluttered like a gay butterfly; then her story was whispered, and the man for whom *she* had sacrificed everything, fearing to compromise himself, and lose the high situation just given him, left her, without one word—to die! but, thank God! not forsaken in her hour of need; for those who would not have noticed her before, now came to her, and vied with each other in offices of sisterly love and kindness, soothing with much tenderness her last hours.

What a strange delusion always seems to possess the minds of those who misconduct themselves at home, to fly to Australia, and fancy that there, unknown and unsuspected, they may begin a new life! There can be no greater mistake than this, they can no more leave behind the stings of an accusing conscience than forget the past by settling in new scenes. Neither is it at all likely that their story will remain unknown; for people of every country and description crowd here, and hourly you meet with some one, whom either you have known before, or who is acquainted with your belongings, or with the friends of your friends.

CHAP. III.

A NIGHT ATTACK. — A FISHING PARTY. — POSTING THE TREES. — AN EMIGRANT'S HOME. — MOUNT FRANKLIN. — AN ALARM AT MIDNIGHT. — BENDIGO. — AVOCA. — AN ENCAMPMENT OF NATIVES. — THE BELLE OF THE AVOCA TRIBE. — RESCUE OF THE BEAUTIFUL LUBRA. — AN ILL-ASSORTED MARRIAGE. — TOO FINE FOR BUSH LIFE.

Nothing particular had occurred at Castlemaine for some time, and we were all quietly pursuing our usual occupations, when one night the camp was startled out of its ordinary composure by a circumstance which rather unpleasantly affected one of our friends. Mr. R——, a German gentleman, having determined to return to Europe, made arrangements to sell his tent and traps preparatory to going home. Accordingly, his sale came off, his trunks were packed, and he closed his tent as usual, and retired to rest for the night. He had just left us, having spent what he believed would be his last evening with us at Castlemaine. We had laughingly told him, on parting, to have his revolver loaded near his pillow in case of need, as it was well known that he had money — the proceeds of his sale. During the

night we heard a terrific noise proceeding from his tent, and on my husband and some other people rushing to the spot, they found that a man had attacked the tent, and had persisted in trying to get in, though he was warned off *three* times; so Mr. R—— had shot him dead. We were very much horrified, as may be imagined, at such an event taking place within a few yards of our tent, the more so as our friend was soon taken into custody by the police. Mr. R., however, was very well known in the colony, and found no difficulty in obtaining his liberation on bail. Still it was a very awkward affair for him, as he was to have gone to Europe by the overland mail, and had only just left himself time to reach Melbourne before it started. Now, however, he was obliged to remain and take his trial, which proved a long one, though the verdict he obtained at last was “justifiable homicide.”

One of our amusements in the lovely evenings was to make a party and ramble down together to one of the creeks near the camp, and while the gentlemen amused themselves with their guns and dogs, we ladies spent our time in reading or talking. On one of these occasions we were fishing for crawfish in the most primitive fashion; the bait, a small piece of meat, was tied to the end of a string, which we then let down into the water close to the bank. The little fish eagerly fastened themselves to the dainty morsels and were thus easily

drawn up, and, with the assistance of a landing net, safely deposited in our basket; and really they gave us a delicious dish for supper. Before we had time to be weary, the sounds of the shots became less distant, and the sportsmen came dropping in, emptying their well-filled bags on the ground, for inspection; and loud were our exclamations of delight and wonder at the extreme beauty of the birds. As for our bird-collecting friend, he seemed in ecstasies, and it was quite a pleasure to watch his handsome, animated countenance as he held forth on the peculiar beauty or rarity of each bird. Suddenly, as he was descanting on the merits of a rare spoonbill, he espied a strange-looking bird on the wing, and as he brought it down with his never-failing gun it proved to be a treasure indeed. It was the nankin bird, or fawn-coloured crane. For my part, I mourned sincerely over the darling little love-birds and parrots of every brilliant hue that strewed the ground as trophies of his skill. Our supper-table that night was well supplied with delicious snipe and quails. The spoonbill and crane we also wished to taste, but Capt. B—— indignantly informed us that they were far too valuable to be turned into food.

Housekeeping at Castlemaine I found extremely expensive. It is true we had abundance of beef, mutton, and veal; the butchers' shops were stocked with everything of the best description; but all other things were

very dear ; poultry, especially, we never thought of buying except in case of sickness. Fowls were fifteen shillings apiece, and eggs twelve shillings a dozen. The first Christmas we were at Castlemaine, as we were walking amongst the diggings, after ordering our dinner at the butcher's, we saw a man carrying a very fine cabbage ; hoping to get one from the same place, we inquired where he had purchased it, and if there were any more to be had. He replied, "No, I gave fifteen shillings for this, but you may have it for a pound." We politely declined, and decided on dining without a vegetable whose price was gold. We often got a kind of fish caught in the Lodder, called "cod," which, with our little friends the crawfish for sauce, was not to be despised. When we wanted very good and very expensive fish, we could sometimes get it from the Murray river ; but in having fish we required butter, which could only be obtained at a station near the Porcupine Inn (which is half way to Bendigo, a distance of some eighteen miles), and then it cost five shillings a pound ! So that it was very rarely indeed that we indulged ourselves with these costly articles. Game we had in abundance, but we could not make up our minds to eat *parrot-soup*, so much the fashion amongst the diggers.

One morning, when our kind friend the doctor was paying us a visit, I told him of a letter I had just received from home, which was causing me much

anxiety. It was from a near relative, entreating us to use our utmost endeavours to find out his son, who had left home two years since with the intention of making his fortune at the gold fields of Australia; he had written on his arrival in Melbourne, but since then not a line from him had reached his family. The doctor remarked that, if he were still in the land of the living, we should soon get hold of him by having notices posted on the trees at the different goldfields, begging him to communicate instantly with his friends. At the same time our friend most kindly volunteered his assistance in the search, by writing to his acquaintances to "be on the look out." The next day he asked us to accompany him to Mount Franklin, commonly called Jim Crow's diggings, that we might see "posting the trees" for ourselves.

Accordingly, we started at eight in the morning, for we had twenty-three miles to ride; and, not having forgotten my fright the night we returned from Tarren-gower, I secretly placed two tiny pistols under my loose riding-jacket. They had been given me by a dear old friend in one of his merry moods, just before we left his house, previous to our embarkation for Australia. They were placed on my breakfast-plate with a request that I would "*use them bravely!*" Tears came into my eyes when I thought of that joyous breakfast-table, and the beautiful little weapons being handed for admiration

from one to another, each one giving me some advice respecting them !

The road to Mount Franklin was like a ride in a beautiful English park with its gentle undulations, deep shadowy glades, and open plains, sometimes diversified by groves of trees and avenues, through which glimpses of the most lovely scenery charmed the eye. The very birds seemed fascinated with the spot ; for never did I behold such a display of beauty as was here exhibited by the feathered tribe ! They were all so tame, too, as if, conscious of their brilliant plumage, they lingered in their flight to be admired ! On one tree a number of cockatoos, which had congregated there, allowed us to ride quite close to them ; and on another, some scarlet lories were balancing themselves on a tiny spray, where the sunlight poured down such golden rays upon their beautifully tinted feathers as to invest them in our imaginations with the hues of paradise. Rozella parrots and the lovely little budgerigars were flying lazily about, enlivening the solitude with their chattering ; the ha ! ha ! of the laughing jackass, too, was heard, the sly fellow himself keeping out of sight ; and the little ground parrots, spotted with gold and black, rose almost under our horses' feet.

We stopped for luncheon at a large station where the doctor had a patient. The house was built on the usual plan, all on the ground floor, surrounded by a

verandah covered thickly with creepers and roses. The drawing-room, into which we were shown, was a happy combination of comfort, neatness, and elegance, proving how like the touch of a fairy's wand is a skilful woman's hand. The family, consisting of an officer's widow, her son, his wife, and several young children, had emigrated and located themselves here long before the gold excitement began; they now possessed a considerable tract of land. The sons and daughters had grown up healthy and strong in this genial climate; and now, each taking charge of some particular department, the daily routine of the station went on like clock-work. The grandmother, with her snowy hair and grey dress, was the very beau ideal of an old lady; she had been with her husband in courts and camps, and her manners were those of a highly bred gentlewoman. When Colonel R—— died, she devoted herself to her son, who was most fortunate in the lady he married, for she was already deeply attached to his mother, and scarcely needed any nearer tie to make her act and feel towards Mrs. R—— as an affectionate daughter. Three girls, from seventeen to twenty, had been educated solely by these ladies, and their acquirements and easy bearing would have put to shame many a London boarding-school Miss.

In distant lands friendships are of quick growth. We were soon chatting pleasantly together, and I was

initiating the young ladies in the mysteries of the Point de Venise and Point de la Poste, and explaining the new kinds of *broderie* then fashionable in Europe, when the doctor put his head into the room and said we "must be going." We persuaded the young ladies to accompany us, and we promised to return with them to dinner—a plan they seemed to enjoy quite as much as we did. As we were riding along they named to us the gorgeous birds that flitted past: the diamond sparrow, the blue wren, the was-beak or fire-tail, and the butcher-bird severally claimed our admiration. Further on we passed close to a very flourishing little farm, and on my pointing it out to one of the Miss R——'s, she said, "Oh! a cockatoo." Thinking she had misunderstood me, I said, "I mean that pretty little farm." "Yes," she repeated, "we call that a 'cockatoo;' small farmers who settle themselves on another person's run are so called here." This perhaps gives the best idea of an Australian *run*, when such an intrusion is of no moment.

When we arrived within a few miles of the camp the country became wild and mountainous; the path lay for some distance on the tops of the ranges, then descended into deep valleys. On reaching the summit of one lofty eminence we were well repaid for the difficulty of the ascent, for we obtained an extensive and magnificent panoramic view of the surrounding country, which was thickly wooded. There is, however, a sameness in the

foliage which disappoints the eye accustomed to the rich tints of American forests, or to the soft autumnal shades of our English woods. The absence of water too is a disadvantage: a winding river or a waterfall would wonderfully enliven a landscape rendered sombre by the heavy colour of the gum-trees, which not even the bright glowing sun of Australia lightens up. Yet the trees are far more gigantic than our largest oaks, and the views *are* very lovely, often bringing to my recollection the wild parts of Spain. The government camp at Mount Franklin is situated on one of the ranges, and is a clean tidy-looking place; the diggers' tents are all close together, and the people look prosperous and healthy.

The doctor, with his usual kindness, immediately spoke about having the notices put up on the trees about the camp, and we had the satisfaction of seeing it done. I could not help keeping my veil up, and peering into the face of every digger that I saw, in hopes of discovering our lost sheep. In one of the tents we enjoyed a most refreshing draught of effervescing water from a well quite near; it was slightly impregnated with iron, and we were cautioned to be careful not to indulge in it too freely, as it was considered injurious. We had little time to stay after our business was completed, and were soon on our way back to Mr. R——'s station, where a really English dinner was

provided for us, which we thoroughly enjoyed. Ample justice was done to chickens and bacon, potatoes and cabbage, with raspberry and currant tarts, for not since we left England had we seen anything so like home. The gentlemen joined us at dinner, and I was astonished to find such a well-informed polished family living, as they did, so far in the bush; they appeared perfectly happy, nor did the younger ones express the least desire to leave Australia. We parted with mutual regret, both parties hoping that the friendship so quickly made would not as quickly fade.

Our ride home was by moonlight; the moon was at its full, and shed a beautiful light upon our path. At a turn in the road we caught a glimpse of the bush on fire, and stopped for a few minutes, awe-struck, to gaze on the scene. It was magnificently grand! the flames chasing one another, as it were, along the scrub, and running up the tall gum trees, till the branches looked like the torches of innumerable fairies. As we got near the diggings the effect was quite melodramatic: the tents lighted up inside, and tipped by the moonbeams with a soft silvery ray; fires blazing round them; loud voices and cries piercing the air; now the flash and sharp report of a revolver, then a moment's silence, broken again by the barking of the watch dogs; and, not least, the uncouth figures of the men, who might, without any change of costume, have personated bandits on the

stage—all combined to heighten the effect, and give to the whole the semblance of a scene in a play. A decidedly Australian welcome it was as we returned, not very much tired, after a day of perfect enjoyment.

Next morning I busied myself in looking out the last numbers of the *Moniteur des Dames*, and materials for embroidery, with the newest books and music I could find, for my young friends, the Miss R——'s. The kind doctor had promised to take charge of the parcel and to see that it soon reached its destination. Then I had arrangements to make for leaving home; for, being anxious to prosecute our search for my cousin, we were to set out next day for Bendigo and the Avoca. Therefore I went to bed more tired than usual, and was soon fast asleep. I was suddenly awakened, however, in the middle of the night, for my husband, hearing the click of a revolver, had risen and set our two bull dogs on the thieves, who, apparently, were not very desperate men, as they instantly decamped, and it was with great difficulty the dogs were called off. From the marks of blood on the teeth of one of them we guessed that one of the men must have been severely bitten; and indeed, not long afterwards, a man was taken into the diggers' hospital at Barker's Creek, having a very bad leg, caused by the bite of a dog. He would not tell the doctor where the dog was nor to whom it belonged; we therefore concluded he was one

of those who favoured our tent with a nocturnal visit. At the diggings people are obliged to keep very fierce and savage dogs, as they are the only means of protection at night.

Bendigo is thirty miles from Castlemaine; the road to it runs along Barker's Creek, and is varied by richly wooded scenery and occasional hills; it loses, however, its great beauty near the township, which is situated on a flat. The vale through which Barker's Creek runs, is lined with tents of a far better description than those at Castlemaine; these are formed into squares and streets, bearing the same names as those in the most fashionable parts of London. After dinner, we went to the Theatre in Pall Mall; the tent was exceedingly well got up, the audience numerous and orderly, and the company far more talented than could have been expected. The next day we rode to the races and were very much pleased; some of the horses were splendid creatures and beautifully ridden. In the hurdle races we remarked that the hurdles were much higher than those used in England. One gentleman surpassed all the others; centaur-like, he almost seemed to be a part of the noble animal he rode. There were fewer disturbances and less fighting than on similar occasions at home; a spirit of order seemed to pervade all classes; the grand stand was crowded with all the beauty and fashion of the surrounding country, and every one appeared to enter with zest into the day's amusement.

The next evening we went to a concert; the orchestra was as good a one as you could hear anywhere. But what astonished me most in all these public places was the order, maintained apparently without effort; not a sound disturbed the performers or the audience while the pieces were being played.

Owing to the kindness and attention of a friend, who gave up to us his own tent, we were most comfortably put up during our stay at Bendigo. The tent was divided in the middle by a screen of Indian matting, and lined with striped Indian cotton; the carpet was rich and handsome; a dressing-table, washing-stands, several luxurious arm-chairs, divans, and cushions covered with worked tidies, constituted the furniture; and vases with all kinds of pretty things ornamented the tent; and, to complete the enchantment, we had an Indian to attend on us. It was quite as comfortable as any room in a house, and far prettier.

I was quite sorry to leave Bendigo, and particularly our pleasant quarters there; but we had our mission to accomplish at the Avoca, for as yet we had failed to discover the lost one. We were very fortunate in finding an agreeable party of ladies and gentlemen, experienced in "bushing it," willing to accompany us. We set off in high spirits; some of the party had riding horses, and others a spring cart, drawn in the Australian fashion by one horse in the shafts and an outrigger. We

got on merrily in this fashion until we commenced the ascent of the first long hill; then the horses drawing the cart began to gib unpleasantly; however, by our getting out and walking up, and afterwards using a little persuasion, we overcame this annoyance. As usual, we were most hospitably received at the station where we stopped to lunch, for eating and drinking here is never overlooked. On leaving our kind entertainers, our horses got on well for some miles, when they positively refused to proceed any further. By this time we had reached the plains, which are miles and miles in extent. There was no help for it but to try two of the riding horses in our cart (fortunately we were a large party, and had a choice of animals); one after another of the horses was tried, but without success. At last only a very vicious beast remained, and when he was put in, to our surprise and delight, he seemed willing and quiet; so, for a short time, we congratulated ourselves that we were all right again, when suddenly the brute began to kick in such a terrific manner — smashing the splash-board, and doing so much damage — that we were glad when we found ourselves safe out of the cart without injury. And now we all collected and looked at each other in dismay; for how were we ever to get to our journey's end? Fortune, however, befriended us in this dilemma, for whilst we were discussing all sorts of impossible methods of getting on, we saw a man approaching, well

mounted and leading another fine-looking animal. This we tempted him to let us hire, and putting it into our cart (which, though very crazy, was pronounced safe enough), we reached Daisy Hill without farther adventure. Here we procured fresh horses, taking good care, however, to ascertain before we started that they were well trained for harness. We were very much disposed to make Daisy Hill our resting-place for the night, but the moon was shining so brightly, and we were so large a party, that there could be no danger of an attack from bushrangers, so we continued our journey. We did not arrive at the Avoca until twelve o'clock, when we had our supper and went to our tent, which was a double one, and contained every comfort a camp could afford.

On looking out next morning we were charmed with the prospect before us; the air too was so delicious and so balmy. The camp was pitched on a high bank of the river Avoca. The river was not running that summer, but there was a large water-hole fifty feet deep. The opposite bank was a vast flat, with clumps of trees, presenting the same lovely parklike appearance so peculiar to the country; and in the distance the Pyrenees raised their magnificent peaks, lighted up by the morning sun. It is quite impossible to convey in words any idea of the loveliness of this view: mountain and plain, sky, foliage, and water, each very beautiful in themselves, formed when thus combined a most enchanting scene.

After breakfast we drove to the foot of the Pyrenees, and there for the first time I saw emus. Mounting our horses we rode up the spur of the mountain; at almost every turn of the path some new view, more beautiful or striking than the last, burst upon our sight till every epithet of admiration was exhausted, and we could only gaze in silence. The birds, flowers, and ferns were all new to me, and so full of interest, that if a single regret could have possessed my mind at the moment, it would have been that I could not examine and sketch each and every one of the beautiful objects before me. Our luncheon was spread in a charming little nook, and we were quietly enjoying our pic-nic and the loveliness of the surrounding scene, when gradually we heard the sound of distant thunder echoing in the mountains; then, as it broke out with sudden energy, and resounded from range to range, the vivid lightning at the same time bringing out distant objects with astonishing clearness, the effect was awfully grand. Then, suddenly, both thunder and lightning ceased, and were succeeded by a calm so still that it was like the silence of the grave. Altogether it was perhaps the grandest and most awful scene I ever witnessed.

During our stay at the Avoca one of our sportsmen shot a wild turkey or bustard, weighing twenty-five pounds. It gave us a delicious dinner; but, as in this strange

country everything is just the opposite of everywhere else, so it was in this case; for the legs of this bird had the white meat and the wings the brown.

The Avoca tribe having erected their *Mi-mis* near us, we spent a whole day in visiting the native camp. These mi-mis are sometimes only fanciful bowers, made of branches freshly cut from the trees; sometimes they are made of the tree itself by the living branches being bent down into the form of a tent; more commonly they are constructed of large strips of bark supported by a pole driven into the ground. The natives are not as disgusting as they are generally represented; they have fine black eyes and long curling hair; the hands and feet of the women are small and beautifully formed, but they all disfigure themselves by piercing the nose, and are usually to be seen with a large sized reed stuck through the holes they make in that organ. We watched one of the natives climb a tall gum-tree by cutting steps for himself in the trunk with his tomahawk as he went up. Chopping a hollow branch in two, he threw down an opossum which was in it to his *lubra* (wife), who instantly prepared and roasted it for us to taste. It was very tough, and had a disagreeable flavour from feeding upon gum leaves, which always have a strongly aromatic taste and smell. We purchased from these natives spears nine or ten feet long: these were most formidable weapons, being barbed at both ends, some with wood,

others with glass. Their long reeds or bamboos were pointed in the same manner, but whether they were poisoned or not we could not ascertain: they usually are. The shields were rudely but curiously carved, and daubed with red and white paint. The *woomera* is a hollow wooden case which they use as a kind of sling to propel their spears. The *waddie* is a club. But the feats they perform with the *boomerang* are most astonishing. It is made of wood, something like a half-moon, and the natives have acquired the knack of throwing it to a distance of more than a hundred yards, in such a manner that it wheels round in the air with a buzzing noise, and, after striking the object aimed at, returns to its owner's feet. This wonder must be seen to be believed. We also saw some curious necklaces of kangaroo's teeth, and one made of a reed grown in the Murray. This is cut into pieces of a quarter of an inch in length, which are then strung on the fine fibres of the kangaroo: twelve or fourteen rows are worn round the neck and form a large bunch. Very pretty baskets are also manufactured from green rushes. The opossum skins, which were well preserved, handsome, and serviceable, made together a grand display, and cost us a mere trifle. They, as well as the kangaroo skins, are tanned with the juice of the wattle bark, which is made by soaking the bark tree in water.

Whilst the gentlemen went off on a shooting excursion

sion, we ladies remained at a station not far from the native encampment, and there we learned a good deal of the natives and their habits. And here I must relate an episode in the life of a *lubra* which is quite a romance.

We remarked a beautiful little half-caste boy playing with the children of our hostess. He was evidently the pet of the little group, and on our expressing our surprise, Mrs. H—— told us the following story:—

His mother, a native girl, was the belle of the Avoca tribe; and any one that saw her large black eyes, long wavy hair reaching below her waist, slight supple figure, and tiny hands and feet, would acknowledge the justice of the preference which made her, as may be imagined, so much sought after by the young men of her tribe. She had lovers without number, who tried to gain her affection by gifts. The skins of the opossum and kangaroo, and even the soft fur of the flying squirrel, were laid at her feet; but in vain, for she repelled all their attentions. This irritated as well as surprised them so much, that their suspicions were aroused, and they determined to watch her when she wandered into the woods alone. To their horror and indignation they found, on following her, that these rambles were for the purpose of meeting her lover, a white man belonging to a neighbouring station. They immediately called a council of the elders of the tribe, and it was decreed by

them that both the *lubra* and her lover must be put to death. The love of one of the natives for the girl overcame his jealousy, and he gave her warning of the fate which awaited her. She found means to put her white lover on his guard, and then fled to Mrs. H——'s station, where she was concealed for a short time from her people, and whilst there she endeared herself very much both to Mrs. H—— and the children. At last some of the tribe discovered her place of concealment and came and demanded her restoration. Mrs. H——, perfectly acquainted with the whole story, for a long time refused to give her up, but on their promising that she would be kindly treated, and not removed from that part of the country, she was reluctantly forced to let her go. The children wept and bewailed her loss greatly, for no one had attended to their little wants so carefully and tenderly as their dear Lucy, as they called her. Very frequently they went to the native camp to see her, but never could prevail on her people to allow her to return with them, even for a day. However, the affair was not destined to end so quietly. Late one night as Mr. H—— was riding home, he heard a tremendous noise in the native camp intermingled with the shrieks of women and the barking of dogs; fearing for poor Lucy, he galloped home, armed some of his men, and very quickly reached the camp. There he heard from some of the *lubras*, that Lucy had given

birth to an infant which was not black, and that, as it was a law amongst them that every white man's child must be put to death, they were going to take the babe from its mother and murder it. Mr. H—— insisted on the *lubras* showing him the way to Lucy's *mi-mi*. There he found several men, chiefs of the tribe, in the act of tearing the child from its mother's arms, whom they had already frightfully wounded in several places. Finding he could not prevail on them peaceably to spare the child, Mr. H—— fired amongst them; his servants came up at the moment, a rush was made, and Lucy and the child carried off. The natives were so much enraged that they showed more courage on the occasion than they usually display; so part of Mr. H——'s men remained behind to cover his retreat, and soon Lucy was safely conveyed to her old home, where Mrs. H——, being an expert doctress, attended to her wounds, and having herself at the time a baby only a few months old, she took poor Lucy's child and nursed it with her own. For a long time Lucy's life was despaired of, but at last the care and attention bestowed on her by the good Mrs. H—— were the means of restoring her to health. Her gratitude and devotion to her mistress is unbounded, she still lives with her, and has become a most trustworthy and faithful servant, tending her mistress in sickness with the utmost affection, and never allowing any one

but herself to wait upon her at any time. The boy was nine years old when we saw him, and a more strikingly handsome child it would be difficult to find; his complexion was light brown; "his hair black as the raven's wing," and eyes of the same hue, which flashed and sparkled at the slightest word or look; his form was supple and lithe as the young fawn. His fondness for horses afforded us much amusement, for, though so young, he could manage the wildest animals on the station, riding them with the most perfect ease, and seemed to possess a power over them equal to Rarey himself. His mother appeared so passionately fond of him, that we thought he must be spoilt, but Mrs. H—— assured us that Lucy often whipped him severely, as his temper was not of the mildest kind, but that she always took him into the bush to inflict the punishment. She cannot be induced to tell the name of his father, whom she has never seen since the people of her tribe threatened his life. She does not go any distance alone, well knowing the revengeful feelings of the blacks. We were very much pleased with her appearance, particularly her manner towards her mistress; indeed we all felt such an interest in her and her handsome boy, that we should have been sorry to lose sight of them.

Our sporting friends returned laden with game and birds for skinning and stuffing. Such a collection as they spread out before our astonished gaze! The wild

turkey, the mountain duck, and the musk duck were numerously represented, also a kind of wood duck which perches on trees, another anomaly of this curious land, where all nature seems reversed. Wattle-birds, parrots, and cockatoos of all sizes and kinds rivalled each other in gorgeous plumage and relieved the sombreness of a dark grey bird, calling itself a mawpawk, but having notwithstanding the habits of an owl.

We found that almost every kind of fruit could be had at the Avoca; very fine bananas, pines, and grapes come from Moreton Bay, and the strawberries were delicious.

We frequently went to the gold office in the camp to see the nuggets which are constantly brought in from the surrounding diggings. Some of fine gold were so heavy that I could not lift them; indeed I saw some at the Avoca nearly as large as the *Welcome* or *Blanche Barkly* nugget.

One day, as I was riding through the camp, I recognised one of our fellow-passengers on the voyage out; the young dissenting minister who, on leaving the ship, had so joyously set out with his bride for their future home. Alas! no smile was on his face now, he looked careworn, and had furrows on his young brow. He earnestly entreated me to go and see his wife, who, he feared, could not reconcile herself to her new life. He himself had succeeded beyond his expectations, having

been most kindly and hospitably received everywhere. "If my wife," he said, "could only forget her fine friends, we might be very happy; but, as I was not born like her, perhaps I am unreasonable." I just heard enough to perceive that there was something wrong between the young couple, and although as a rule I deprecate all interference in family disputes, yet I thought this was a case where a few seasonable words might be of service, especially as I had learned something of the young lady's character during our three months' voyage; so I begged my friends to call for me on their return from riding, as I wished to pay a long visit to my intended patient. Her tent was untidy — therefore uncomfortable; showing that she was too fine to do anything for herself; and she was the very personification of discontent and vanity, dressed in a would-be fashionable style, and adorned (?) with chains and bracelets of a most questionable quality. I allowed her to give free vent to her pent-up feelings, and listened, not very patiently I confess, to a detail of fancied humiliations and insults, the indifference of her husband to her "former position," and the horribly vulgar society with which she was forced to associate. The first months of her married life had been passed in various *stations* with "farmers" and their "vulgar" wives, whom she was compelled every moment of the day to make feel that they must not treat her as an

equal. She had had constant quarrels wherever she had been, and one person had told her husband in her presence that, unless he "gave her a proper set down, she would be the ruin of him." Her husband was the son of a farmer himself, and therefore could not feel for her.

I thought, while she was talking, that she was indeed one of those who are blind to the blessings they enjoy, and who look at their petty annoyances through a microscope, gathering carefully the thistles, and flinging away the bright flowers of life.

When she ceased, breathless and excited, I endeavoured to point out soothingly her mistake, in the first instance, in insisting on marrying a man to whom her father very properly objected, because he knew nothing of his belongings. I assured her that she had been most fortunate in having found only one fault with which to charge her husband,—that of his birth,—a matter of moonshine in the country they were living in. The situation in which he was placed necessitated his mixing freely with all classes, and as long as she exhibited the bearing and dress of a Christian gentlewoman, and endeavoured with all her might to assist him in his ministerial labours, she would be honoured for his sake; but if, on the contrary, she gave herself absurd airs, and talked of her "family" and "good society," she could only expect to meet with contempt. I entreated her

not to trifle with her husband's affection, but make the best of the lot she had herself chosen, for there was much happiness in it. She took kindly all I said to her, and I promised to introduce her to the ladies with whom I was acquainted in the camp, and particularly to Mrs. H——, who, I knew, would, by example and precept, assist her in carrying out her best resolutions. The next day she and her husband were invited to spend the day with our party, who made a point of being very civil to "the minister," thereby raising him in his wife's estimation; and I am happy to add that she was so completely taken in hand by my friends, themselves very sensible women, that she is now, by their account, doing her duty to God and her husband, who often writes to us that his wife is all he can desire.

Far and near we sought the lost cousin, but without success, and had at last to bid farewell to our kind friends and the beautiful Avoca, and return to Castlemaine. This we accomplished with ease and comfort, as we took care to have good horses.

CHAP. IV.

CAMP AT CASTLEMAINE.—BABIES AT A BALL.—THE LOST FOUND.
 —NOTICE TO QUIT.—AUSTRALIAN PETS.—A VISIT TO THE F——S.
 —CONTINUATION OF THE F——S' LIFE.—SAD TERMINATION.

THE land sales were just going on when we reached home, and my husband realised a large sum of money by buying allotments in the township of Castlemaine and also at Muckleford flat for agricultural purposes. It is considered that farms pay extremely well here, as the produce always finds a ready market in Castlemaine.

On one of our quiet Sundays we took a walk to the camp. All was so still you might have fancied yourself miles from the diggings. We crossed a good stone bridge, which had just been built over the creek, and reached the flat on which the camp is situated. The Commissioners were just going to their mess, which was in a canvass house. They were a numerous party, notwithstanding the report that many of them were married. The Chief Commissioner or Resident Warden has a very nice house and garden. We passed a house a

little beyond, which quite caught my fancy: in front it had only two windows and a door between them, but at each side were two large bay windows; whilst a very deep verandah, covered with roses and luxuriant creepers in full blossom, gave it a particularly pleasing appearance; it was surrounded by a nice garden seemingly well stocked with vegetables and flowers. This was the residence of the officer commanding the detachment of the 40th Regiment. We then crossed the creek to Campbell's flat, and returned home, threading our way among the diggers' holes.

Soon after we received an invitation to a ball at Barker's Creek, which was of course accepted, as I dearly love dancing. We joined some of our friends in hiring an omnibus, which took us very comfortably, for our dresses were neither tumbled nor tossed, and we had a merry ride into the bargain. A large canvass house had been erected for a ball-room, smaller tents for refreshments and ladies' dressing rooms. On entering one of the latter, I was much astonished to observe a number of little bundles on the bed, as if each lady had rolled up her shawls into the smallest possible compass. Imagining such to be the case, I began taking off mine, and pushed aside one of the bundles to make room for it. Fancy my amazement at hearing a shrill cry proceed from the pushed bundle, which was soon taken up by all the others in chorus. Then in rushed the

woman who was hired to attend the ladies, and solved the mystery by saying they were all *babies*! They were of different ages, varying from three to twelve and even eighteen months. The mothers, not being able to leave them at home, and wishing to join in the evening's amusement, brought them and put them to sleep on the beds and sofas, visiting them during the intervals of the dance to see whether they were in existence. I never discovered whose baby I pushed, nor if the mother heard of my barbarity. It certainly was a funny scene. Going to the tent in the course of the evening, I saw several ladies walking about, in full ball dress of course, nursing and hushing their dearly-beloved infants.

The ball-room, too, surprised us not a little. It was beautifully decorated with artificial flowers; the walls covered with pink and white calico, and the pillars which supported the roof adorned with garlands intermixed with pink and white. The effect was charming. The adjoining tents were lighted with Chinese lamps, and fitted up quite luxuriously with carpets, divans, and sofas. The band was excellent, and dancing was kept up with great spirit until daylight. No expense had been spared on the supper, which was pronounced "capital." I was rather amused at seeing some of the gentlemen diggers, with patent-leather boots, a scarlet shirt or jumper in front, revealing a beautifully fine

embroidered shirt and inimitable tie — the remains of a home outfit,

The greatest order prevailed, and the whole affair was admirably got up.

On our return home my husband told me he had got a clue to our lost cousin, and that he had made arrangements with the doctor and a gentleman he met at the ball to accompany us next day to Fryer's Creek, for it was very evident the young gentleman was keeping out of our way. To Fryer's Creek accordingly we went; and when we reached the diggings, the doctor and I separated from the rest of the party, and went about amongst the holes inquiring for specimens. Not finding the specimen we sought, we wandered about the tents, where the diggers' servants were preparing their masters' dinners. At last I saw the doctor gazing fixedly at a young fellow, whose face was much more intently bent over the savoury mess boiling in the pot before him than was at all necessary; in fact he stooped so much that his long hair quite shaded his face. A look from the doctor told me that he thought the object of our search was found; so, bringing up my horse as near to him as I could, I bent down and touched him, saying, "Charlie, how is the mutton hash?" There was no resisting the visions of home called up by this little enigmatical speech; he flung himself on my horse's neck, and, still hiding his face, wept bitterly. We were soon quite alone, and then

he told me all about himself: how, on his return from Eton, he had entreated his father to allow him to try his fortune in Australia instead of going into the army: how every argument that love and parental authority could suggest was used in vain, and he was allowed to have his own way; a sum of money was given him with the understanding that, when it was all spent, he was to return, and a letter of credit was sent to a bank in Melbourne to enable him to get home in case of failure. The moment he landed he rushed up to the diggings with a party of young, unexperienced men. They were not only unsuccessful in the gold fields, but sickness, arising from unaccustomed hardships, drove them to seek other means of gaining their daily bread. How Charlie had squandered his money I never inquired; however, he worked on the public roads, washed bottles, drove a dray, then went up again to the diggings to try his fortune a second time; but the same obstacle still stood in his way; he could not stand the fatigue of digging, and so was reduced to the necessity of taking the situation of cook for his party. As they paid him well he was making money, and had already earned almost sufficient to take him home in a modest way; for he would not touch his generous father's money. A sad smile was on his face when he said, "I little thought at Eton, when a fag, that my accomplishments as cook would have been so useful to me." He confessed that he bitterly regretted the past;

that he had for some time seen his folly, and henceforward he hoped to become a better and a wiser man. He promised to come to us in the evening (when the shade of night would cover his costume), and remain with us until arrangements were made for his leaving the colony.

Poor Charlie! he only wanted this severe lesson to make him a most excellent fellow, for all his good qualities hitherto had been marred by his wilfulness and selfishness. The "mutton hash" had been a standing joke against him for many years. I was a little girl, though two years older than himself, when I was once on a visit at his father's, a fine old place in the country. There was a large party staying in the house, and I suppose the cook thought anything would do for the nursery dinner, for on one occasion she sent in only hashed mutton and rice pudding, to the great indignation of Master Charlie, whose fits of passion were most laughable. But finding he could neither get redress nor a better dinner, he filled his pockets with dry bread and left the room with the air of a hero, imagining he was breaking his mother's heart by his abstinence!

On our return home we went to the camp and bought everything he could require to make him presentable, and we had the satisfaction of seeing him at our tea-table that evening, ~~■~~ very different looking

person from the digger's cook of the morning. I may as well add, that, on my return to England, I met Mr. Charles —, a lieutenant in Her Majesty's —th Regiment, and learned that he was as great a favourite amongst his brother officers as he is at home, but that he never talks of his Australian campaign.

The time was drawing near for our leaving the diggings. My husband's affairs called him to Melbourne, and it was with sincere regret that I contemplated the change. Although we had been living in a tent, and deprived of many accustomed comforts, yet these privations were amply compensated by the unaffected kindness, friendliness, and hospitality I had experienced from all with whom it had been my good fortune to meet. A shade of sadness *would* steal over me at the thought, that I should no longer make one of the merry coterie, and that we *all* could never hope to meet again in the same unrestrained intercourse; for city air is sure to bring with it formality and ceremony as a matter of course.

Our rides had now a depressing influence over our spirits. Our bounding horses were taking us too fast to bid good-bye to those who had made our sojourn here so agreeable, and my eyes fondly lingered over the lovely landscape I never should look on again. Indeed I felt all this very forcibly on my way to Mrs. R——'s station, when I called to mind our first ride there. *Then* the gorgeous birds claimed my sole admiration;

now their chattering and *ha-ha-ing* grated on my ear ; so much does the colouring we give to objects depend on the mood we are in at the time. How rarely do two persons give the same description of a view, or even sketch it alike : one will be sunshiny and bright, the other have clouds and deep shadows. Very strongly was this exemplified on one occasion at a large drawing class of young ladies at home. The group to be copied consisted of a statue, a large vase of flowers, and a bright Albanian scarf, and we all noticed that, according to the temperament of the lady, so was the sketch in a most remarkable degree.

Mrs. R——'s smiling station soon came in sight. The dogs were the first to welcome us ; then came out from the shady corners of the verandah the tamed birds and beasts (which always abound in an Australian house), to receive their accustomed patting ; and last of all, attracted by the uproar, the lovely bright-eyed girls. When we collected in the drawing-room, we resolved to forget that this was to be our last day together, and to enjoy to the full the present moment. A little confidence was imparted which I had half suspected before ; that of the approaching marriage of the eldest daughter to a gentleman who had a very flourishing station not more than a hundred miles distant. It had been arranged between them at the ball at Barker's Creek, although they had known and loved each other for

some time. Opportunities for young people to meet each other are sometimes rare, so that a ball or a wedding is almost sure to hasten many a lingering attachment.

Most good-naturedly they gave me the choice of all their pets, that I might have some remembrance of them, and I was fairly puzzled which to carry away. The kangaroo was too big, and so was the *native companion*; besides I did not admire its propensity of plucking out any eye it takes a fancy to. The cockatoos, baby bear, and parrots all passed in review. At last I could not resist two darling little Būdgerigares, such lovable little pets, that can be taught almost anything; so I chose them and a pair of green leek parrots. The plumage of these birds is of a most delicate green, with a necklace of yellow feathers. They could say "everything."

Somehow I dread having pets; mine seem always to have shared the fate of Hinda's gazelle: —

"When it came to know me well,
And love me, it was sure to die."

I have vividly before me now the remembrance of one of my favourites — a mackaw — perched on a tree near my bedroom window in Demerara, drenched with the tropical rain. We were on the eve of embarkation, and I had been desired to give my beautiful pet away, as it

was too large a bird to take home, and had never been caged or chained. It was a sad parting, for the fierce bird loved me with no common affection, and would come to me, if I called it, from the top of the loftiest tree; so it was with tears in my eyes that I kissed my pet and gave it to the lady who had promised to love it and take care of it for me. It was taken to a distance, but it flew back to me, and weary and wet looked reproachfully into my face.

Although we may have many partings during our life here, we do not get accustomed to them so as to be indifferent to the pain which in various degrees they must all cause. My heart was lightened in this instance, however, by a promise that Miss R. and her mother would come and pay us a visit in Melbourne, as they would have to go there to purchase the trousseau for the approaching marriage; and I was delighted at the idea of watching the effect such a change of scene would produce on my unsophisticated young friend.

Our last visit was with our dear friend the doctor to Mr. William F——(he had not yet taken his father's title). I was very anxious to see the lady whose fascination had made him deaf to his father's wishes, and forgetful of the land of his birth. The barometer fell, which in Australia indicates fair weather, so we had the prospect of a charming ride, without any very painful leave-takings to mar its pleasure.

“Henry F—— is a noble fellow,” said the doctor as we rode along. “His brother is justly proud of his distinguished talents, which bid fair to make him one of the greatest statesmen of his day; but he little imagines how much he owes to Henry’s generous interference in his favour. The lawyer who drew up the late Sir William’s will is an acquaintance of mine; and, knowing my friendship for Henry, he wrote me a most affecting account of a scene he witnessed between him and his father. The former had been summoned home in haste on account of Sir William’s dangerous illness; he tended his dying parent with the most filial affection, and a temporary improvement rewarded his labour of love. But Sir William felt that he had delayed too long the making of his will, as another relapse might put it out of his power; and if he died intestate, everything would go to his eldest son, an event he by no means intended to allow. He therefore sent for his solicitor, Mr. S——, and was proceeding to leave everything of which he died ‘possessed’ to Henry, when the noble youth threw himself on his knees beside his father, and with tears in his eyes entreated him not to die leaving William unforgiven. He pleaded his brother’s cause so earnestly, beseeching his father to remember how very, very young he was when he married; how severely he had been already punished for that one fault; how sincerely both he and Clara had since repented of it; that it was

impossible for Sir W — not to be touched. His lip quivered; he tried to speak; but for some time the words were inaudible. At last he articulated something about its not being right to deprive Henry now of that inheritance which for so many years he must have looked upon as his. But Henry had never done so; he had always felt that it was William's by birthright, and only forfeited for a time, and he had never ceased to look forward to the reconciliation which one day he hoped to witness. Something of this he now expressed to his dying parent.

"After a long silence, and apparently much perplexed consideration, Sir William's decision was at length made; he divided his property equally between his two sons, leaving Heathfield Park to William at Henry's earnest request.

"Some time after, when he knew he was dying, he laid his hand solemnly on Henry's head, saying, 'My son, you taught me to forgive: you have made my last hours happy and peaceful. May every best blessing be yours, and may you yourself some day possess that greatest of all treasures — a dutiful child.' These were his last words, he died as he had lived, in ignorance of the one great sorrow which had blighted the life of his favourite son. Henry himself, till then, had believed that he had succeeded in crushing down every thought of his hopeless love; but those words of his dying parent revealed his

own heart to him, and there he found Clara's image still silently but unchangeably enshrined. Henry and I were always unreserved with each other. I knew of his early preference for Clara, but he has not spoken of it for so long, that I hoped it was conquered. It was with great pain therefore that I read his account of his father's death, showing, as it did, that the old wound was still unhealed. It was not for some time afterwards that I heard of his noble conduct through Mr. S——."

The good doctor had been speaking rapidly, and as if very much agitated. I could not now wonder at his love and admiration for Mr. Henry F——, and as we drew up our horses at Mr. F——'s station I was almost disappointed that it was not the younger brother we were going to see.

The doctor had talked us all into a very serious mood, which certainly accorded better with the character of our hosts than the merry one in which we had last visited them. Mrs. F—— was alone when we arrived ; her husband was in his farm, she said, but she would send for him. The doctor, however, begged her not to do so, and he and my husband set off themselves to look for him, and to see the farm, so Mrs. F—— and I were left alone.

When we hear a great deal of a person's beauty, we are generally disappointed on seeing them, simply because, in our own mind, we exaggerate the praises bestowed upon them. I knew Mrs. F—— must be nearly thirty,

and yet, with strange inconsistency, I experienced a shade of disappointment at not beholding the lovely girl of sixteen who had been described to me. I looked in vain for the "long black curls;" her hair was plainly braided over a cheek that had lost the bright rose-like colour of early youth, and the settled expression of melancholy on her countenance showed that it was no trivial sorrow that had thus left its impress there. But she *was* very beautiful, very graceful; there was something very winning in her smile still; and we were soon chatting together pleasantly, and with as much ease as three months' familiar intercourse in the old country would have given us. When she spoke of returning to England a look of pain crossed her face, which made me ask her if she dreaded the voyage. She looked up with an inquiring glance, and said, "I can see that you are a great friend of Dr. C——'s; indeed," she added, smiling, "I have sometimes been inclined to be jealous at the way he speaks of you. Surely you must have heard our story from him." I confessed I had, and she then said, with much feeling, "I dread going home more than I can express. What a changed creature I am since last I saw the home of my childhood! how guilty I shall feel when we go to live at Heathfield, and are surrounded by things that will constantly remind us of him whom we have both so grieved. I have received many friendly letters of congratulation on my husband's good fortune,

so little do people imagine that it can be a trial to us."

I tried to say a few words of comfort,— a very difficult task in a case like this; however, she seemed thankful to anyone for showing her sympathy, for people in general supposed, she said, that their sorrow must have worn off; but no length of time could alter the feelings with which they both now looked back upon that one fault of their youth. It was that crisis in her life, which most people experience some time or other, when a few weeks suffice to change a merry, light-hearted girl into a thoughtful woman. It may sometimes be thankfulness for great happiness which leads to these deeper feelings, but they are oftener the result of anxiety or suffering. Time, that universal soother, will restore cheerfulness to a young spirit when the immediate pressure of affliction is removed; but the heart can seldom entirely forget the weight which has been there.

The three gentlemen soon came in, and the conversation became general. My husband asked Mr. F—— when he thought of going to England. "Oh! I am such an exemplary husband," he replied, "I always leave it to Mrs. F—— to name the day." The same look of pain crossed Clara's face as I noticed before; but ere she could reply, the doctor said, "I recommend instant

change of air for my patient, so your best plan is to start at once."

"Some of our friends seem very anxious to get rid of us," said Mrs. F——, smiling.

"I deny the imputation," retorted the doctor, "for as I intend if possible to return in the same ship with you, I hope thus to see much more of you than I can here."

This piece of information seemed to reconcile Mrs. F—— greatly to the idea of going; indeed I very much suspect that the kind doctor came to this determination mainly on her account, he was so thoroughly good-natured, and forgetful of self, where the interests of his friends were concerned. Probably, too, he was anxious to see Mr. Henry F——, who must much have needed a sympathising friend at such a time.

After a little more chat we took leave of the F——s. Mrs. F—— and I mutually regretted that our first meeting must also necessarily, for some years at least, be the last. "But let us look forward," she said cheerfully, "to meeting again some day at Heathfield, when I hope I shall give you a less melancholy reception." And so we parted — never, as it proved, to meet again in this world. They sailed shortly after for England in the ill-fated —— ! Urgent business compelled the good doctor to stay some months longer, and thus his life was providentially preserved.

Their eldest boy was lost with them, but the youngest boy, with the nurse and baby-girl, was saved almost by a miracle. When last I heard of them they were living at Heathfield with their uncle Henry, as his adopted children and joint heirs.

Little Sir Richard is already as great a favourite amongst the people as ever his poor father was in his young days, but the baby Clara is her uncle's darling. He loves her far too dearly to spoil her in the least, and so we may hope that she will always continue to be, as she certainly is now, his greatest earthly treasure—his dutiful child.

At last the time came for us to return to Melbourne. All our things were packed, and we thought we had taken a last farewell of all our friends but the family with whom we had promised to spend the last day, when the German band came up from Melbourne, and its exhilarating strains so inspired the gentlemen that a ball was extemporised. I was just regretting that our departure could not be delayed a little, but had given up all thoughts of being one of the party, when the doctor came in to say that we *must* go to it; all our friends would think it a bad compliment if we stayed away. With a sigh I pointed to the corded boxes which contained all my finery, and assured him I should only have been too happy to join the party if I had anything

to wear but the dark travelling dress in which he saw me. He laughed, and said, "Never mind that, my little lady; I was quite prepared for these objections, and come laden with messages on the subject: you are to have the pick and choice of all the ball-dresses in the camp, and wear the one that fits you best." So it was settled, thanks to the kindness of friends, that I should not be excluded for want of a dress: indeed, so many were sent me to try on, that I had no difficulty in finding one to my taste. I chose a white lace, with white camelias, from the gay collection of pretty things so kindly lent me. The exhilarating strains of the charming band dispelled all thoughts of the next morning's journey, and I did enjoy my favourite amusement to the utmost. It was not till the rosy tints of early dawn began to appear that we separated, and there was an end of my pleasant visit to the diggings.

CHAP. V.

JOURNEY TO MELBOURNE. — MELBOURNE. — DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS. — THE DRIVE TO TOORAC. — A RIDE TO ST. KILDA. — THE SURVEY PADDOCK. — A BUSHING PARTY. — THE THEATRES. — OUT-BREAK AT BALLARAT. — BOTANICAL GARDENS.

OUR return to Melbourne was accomplished in very different style to the way in which we travelled to the diggings two years before. That length of time had made a vast difference in the colony: the roads were wonderfully improved, and the spring-cart we hired was good and comfortable. We stopped at Kyneton, and put up at a very fair hotel; the landlady, a jolly widow, supplied us with everything we could desire. The next day we were not so fortunate; the roads were so heavy we could not get further than Gisbourne, where, being very much fatigued, we went early to bed; but alas! not to sleep, for the native cats, hitherto strangers to me, made such a curious, unearthly noise, that we were puzzled to know from whence it proceeded: it was something between loud grunting and snuffling, and so near us did it appear that I begged my husband to rise and ascertain the cause of our annoy-

ance. The fact that the troublers of our sleep were only cats did not lessen the torment, for not one hour of rest did we obtain during the night. These tiresome little animals get between the ceiling and the roof, but it is very difficult to persuade oneself that they are not gamboling under the bed or about the room. They are very like ferrets; some are white, others have a black coat, spotted white: these last are the prettiest, and their skins make handsome rugs.

The next day we arrived in Melbourne, where, although we had heard of the wonderful progress the city had made, we were not prepared to find in two short years such a remarkable change. Lodgings had been taken for us at the top of Collings Street East: we came in late, hungry and tired, and were disposed to be contented with anything; therefore we thoroughly appreciated a nicely served dinner, and all the comforts with which we found ourselves surrounded. The house was lighted with gas, the bedrooms were clean and airy, with water laid on, and baths; in short, everything was as like a first-rate lodging in London as possible. I had been very happy in a tent, but I must confess I did greatly enjoy and value the thousand little comforts of a house to which I had been so long a stranger; yet I look back with a grateful heart to my gipsy life, so free from sickness and sorrow, and, moreover, so pleasantly passed amongst those who from strangers

became warm and attached friends, and whose kindness I never can forget.

Next morning we sallied forth to delight our eyes with the beautiful city of Melbourne, and also to make purchases. Walking down Collings Street, which is wide and clean, and really a fine street, we were much struck with the handsome shops of every description. The tailors made a great display, clothes of every kind were exhibited—caps for the Volunteer Artillery, swords for the yeomanry, and jockey caps and jackets for the approaching races. The bonnet shops (my peculiar crotch) were very grand. At the drapers we found the articles reasonable, and suited to every taste and purse, from the cheapest cotton fabrics to the richest materials London or Paris could supply.

Our next visit was to a land-agent to inquire about a house. From him we heard of several likely to suit us; one was at South Yarra, to which locality I particularly wished to go, as I had heard that the gardens extended to the water's edge. But as it was too late to inspect houses we decided on going to the nearest on the list; so we crossed the river near Lonsdale House to the common at Princes Bridge Barracks; from thence we went through the botanical gardens by the bank of the Yarra, which is a deliciously cool and pretty walk, as the river is fringed with willows which fling their drooping boughs into the water.

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The house we sought was quite close to the Richmond Punt, and almost opposite to the Cremorne Gardens. It was built of brick, and the rooms were all on the ground floor with a wide verandah running round three sides. The stables were good, whilst a paddock, a very large fruit garden, and a vineyard made it a desirable residence. The rent at first seemed very high, being four hundred and fifty pounds a year, but on consideration we took it for a term of five years, as we were anxious to get settled as soon as possible, and then commenced the arduous, puzzling, and yet delightful toil of furnishing.

In Collings Street we purchased almost everything we required as good as we could have procured in England. The newest inventions and the most fashionable patterns are sent out here immediately after their appearance in London or Paris. These things, however, are by no means cheap: our furniture was most expensive, a sofa costing fifteen pounds, and chairs in proportion; but we invariably found the tradespeople most civil and obliging.

Our attention was next turned to the garden. As the produce was far too great for our own consumption, we hired a gardener, and made arrangements with him after supplying us with fruit and vegetables, he was to dispose of the remainder. The sum thus obtained went some way towards the rent of the house. Then I bought poultry; and, as eggs were six shillings a dozen, I used

to send a few dozens every week to my grocer, for which he gave me credit in his bill. I soon became very expert in rearing chickens, and always had the produce of the farm-yard to fall back on in the hot weather. We also kept three goats, as milk was a shilling a quart. Every morning the butcher used to send for orders and bring the meat, as in the hot weather we were obliged to eat it the very day it was killed. The greatest plague in Melbourne is the flies; they are more disgusting if possible than those at the diggings, for they alight on your plate at dinner, and leave such disgusting traces that all idea of dining is at an end. We found a store room very much wanted, so we agreed with our landlord that we should build one on our own plan, if he paid something towards the expense. This he willingly promised to do; we therefore erected a large square brick room immediately over a tank in the yard, thereby insuring coolness. The roof was of slate, very shelving and projecting; an opening was made through the roof and ceiling, so that a current of air might pass freely through the apartment; the windows were protected by fine canvass wire to prevent the flies coming in. We had shelves and cupboards made; also a trap-door in the floor, so that the tank might be cleaned when required without inconvenience. The tank held fourteen or fifteen thousand gallons of water, and, as our roof was slate, the water was perfectly good for every purpose, and we

never had to buy any, which was of some consequence to us, as it was sold for four shillings a load or barrel. The store room we found succeeded admirably ; it was always deliciously cool and fresh.

The mosquitoes were so very annoying in summer that, besides mosquito curtains for our bed, we nailed "lino," a kind of net, to the window frames, so that we were not obliged to close the windows at night, which was a great luxury.

Our establishment consisted of two maid-servants, a housemaid and a cook, and the coachman, who always waited at table. The women-servants, as is the custom in this country, did the washing between them, so we had a washing machine and also a patent mangle ; thus, though their wages were high, we had no washing to pay for. The coachman and cook were a married couple ; they received eighty pounds a year ; both were most excellent English servants, perfectly trained in their several departments. The housemaid, who also acted as parlour maid, was Irish ; she got up the fine things beautifully : her wages were thirty-five pounds. I would very strongly recommend Irish servants to any one settling in the colonies, as I found, from my own experience and observation, that if properly managed and well treated they become different beings when away from Ireland, attaching themselves strongly to the

family and making light of many a little inconvenience which would scare an English servant.

We kept two riding horses and a dog-cart, which prevented our having to hire a carriage when we went out, which was there the great expense of visiting. Two pounds ten shillings is frequently the charge for conveyance to and from a party. We also had a boat, which was a source of much enjoyment during the hot months. When it was not convenient for us to use our own horses to go into town, we used to hire a boat and row down the river. The charge for each person was only a shilling. I need hardly say that the boat was a far more agreeable mode of conveyance than the other alternative, the omnibus, the fare of which was sixpence.

As soon as we were at leisure we drove to Toorac, the residence of the Governor, to leave our cards, as is the usual custom in the colonies.

Government House is between four and five miles from Melbourne, and nothing can be more charming than the drive to it, passing, as it does, by a succession of gentlemen's seats, many of them giving evidence of the highly cultivated tastes of their owners; indeed their beauty and variety would lead one to imagine that each architect had resolved that his own design should bear away the palm. Toorac is a large handsome

place, which the winding Yarra almost surrounds by her silver girdle. The house, however, is not sufficiently large to correspond with the extent and beauty of the grounds.

Shortly after we received an invitation to a ball. The number of persons invited was so great that we were nearly two hours in the avenue. On these occasions policemen are stationed at intervals, so that no carriage is allowed to break the line. The arrangements that evening were excellent, and the supper handsome and in good taste; but the house was far too small for so large an assemblage. The effect, too, of the ball was dimmed by the crowd: it would have been really brilliant had there been space enough for the display of the elegant dresses and magnificent parures of jewels worn by most of the ladies. We met several persons we had known before, and also made some new acquaintances; but I must confess the evening was saddened to me by the apparition of poor Adelaide's husband, gaily dancing away in the same quadrille as myself! What thoughts must have passed through his mind as my glance met his? He looked disturbed; conscience did not sleep. No; after such acts as his, it cannot rest. Annihilation would be a milder punishment than its perpetual upbraidings. It may well be said that sin is its own chastisement; for though he might be flattered and caressed by the bright young creature at his side,

did her dove-like eyes bring no remembrance of one, now lying in her cold grave, — his victim ?

Hearing that a shark had been taken near the Red Bluff, and was there being exhibited, we determined to go and see it, being only too glad of an excuse for a good gallop. The distance to the Red Bluff was nearly twelve miles from our house ; this we accomplished in an hour and five minutes, great part of the road leading us over open downs or commons covered with ferns and wild heather. The day was bright and breezy ; we descended by a steep path to the beach, and there saw the wonderful *tiger shark*, which had been caught by some fishermen in a net, and was still in the water, where they intended to keep it as long as possible. It was well secured in the net, and was feeding on fish with which its captors had supplied it. It was eight feet long, and spotted like a leopard ; its mouth was truly terrible, and a more disgusting-looking creature I certainly never beheld.

We returned to St. Kilda by the sea-shore, and were in time to see the seine drawn to the beach by some Chinese fishermen, who have tents pitched along the shore. They had taken quantities of snapper, butter-fish, a small kind of whiting, and many curious varieties of the finny dwellers of the deep, which I very much regret I was not learned enough to estimate. Really, to enjoy a new country, you should be quite *up*

in all the sciences; or at the least have an idea of the various specimens which are constantly exhibited to your wondering eyes. These Chinese fishermen live by salting and drying these fish in the sun, and sending them up to their countrymen at the diggings. They often catch little sharks and dog-fish.

After a delightful canter on a common between Brighton and St. Kilda, we came to a tent where we were told delicious oysters were to be had. Accordingly, we stopped there, and made a very good luncheon, for we found they were not at all over-rated. The tide being out, we got upon the sands again, and there, such a lovely scene burst upon us! Description would fail to give any idea of its beauty. The sun in setting threw a golden hue over the sea, brightening Station Peak, and lighting up the shipping at Williamstown and Melbourne for a few minutes most brilliantly; nearer still, and just before us, St. Kilda, with its white houses in terraces, separated from the sea only by the road, reflected the brightness, and sparkled joyously in the sunlight.

The bathing establishments are one of the gems of Melbourne. No places could be better adapted for the purpose. Gentlemen have, at some distance from the shore, a bathing ship, from which they may jump into the water and swim a certain distance, buoys being placed to prevent the uninitiated from getting within

reach of sharks. The ladies are equally cared for, and the arrangements made for them are most comfortable.

In this pleasure-loving city there is no lack of amusement. Dinners, balls, and picnics, or rather *bushing-parties*, follow each other in rapid succession, scarcely giving breathing-time to the votaries of pleasure; and it certainly requires no little skill to keep out of the vortex, and to enjoy quiet home evenings without giving offence. The picnic parties given here are by far the most enjoyable of the city amusements. The Survey Paddock is the spot most generally selected for the purpose. Our first visit to it was with some Castle-maine friends. Our boat being too small for our whole party, we hired others from the Richmond Punt just below our house, and taking with us a kettle for tea, panikins to drink from, a frying-pan, saucepan, and a well-stored basket, we, with light hearts, launched our little barks, and were soon swiftly gliding on the dark-flowing waters of the Yarra. Very lovely was that row! The scenery, from the twistings and windings of the river, was ever presenting new aspects, and many an exclamation of delight escaped us in chorus as new scenes were thus unfolded to our view. The banks were adorned by gentlemen's houses, surrounded by verandahs, gaily covered with rich coloured creepers; the gardens and vineyards sloped down to the river,

each having pretty boat-houses shaded by willows, which seem to luxuriate in this locality; whilst as a striking contrast, lofty gum trees stood out in their gaunt picturesque beauty, giving a decided character to the scenery. From spots so thickly shaded from the sunlight as to be dark and cool, we would emerge suddenly into the broad glare of mid-day; then, again, one bank of the river would be skirted by a stony common while the other was wooded to the very water's edge. So various and continually shifting was the scene, that we could not get accustomed to it, but were constantly being taken by surprise by some unexpected change.

Survey Paddock is a large wooded park, free from brushwood, with sunny spots and shadowy glades—just the place for a picnic, where young lovers can breathe their sweet nothings in scenery congenial to their feelings. We had a pair of these turtle-doves in our party, who soon (by accident of course) lost themselves in the solitary dells, the discreet sister who accompanied them having suddenly acquired a passion for ferns, which grow in profusion in this paradise. The *maiden-hair* especially seems to revel here. Some of the party stayed quietly fishing in the river; to this sober set I attached myself, and in a short time, with worms for bait, we had caught a famous basketful of a little fish called *whitebait*, from its resemblance to the

old country fish of that name. The Yarra abounds with it, and very delicious it is.

Our bird-collecting friend was of the party, and made himself very happy by shooting some blue kingfishers.

And now we began to be hungry, so the gentlemen in true bush fashion lighted fires, and every one had his appointed task to perform: fish was fried, potatoes boiled, and even curry heated, so that at last we sat down to a grand dinner. I could not help thinking whether as much laughing would be going on if we were *compelled* to cook our dinners, and how many of the gentlemen would push away their plates with a grimace, if the fish were a little burnt, or the curry a little smoked at their own homes! However, on these occasions all is *couleur de rose*. We delayed our return till the moon had risen, and then, with our boats hooked together, and singing catches and glees, we glided down the river, whilst the southern cross glittering over our heads reminded us how far we were from home.

Taking advantage of the visit of our friends, and wishing at the same time to make their stay with us as agreeable as possible, we devoted ourselves to lionising this extraordinary city — so young and yet so flourishing, which possesses all the institutions, public buildings, and places of amusement only found in the first-rate cities of the old world.

The Cathedral, the first place we visited, is neither

the largest nor the handsomest of the numerous places of worship; both St. Paul's and St. Mark's far exceed it in grandeur and architectural design.

The Exhibition building is a little gem, it is a miniature model of the Crystal Palace, and of much beauty. It was opened for the exhibition of the various specimens of native produce, together with the works of art and industry which were destined to represent Victoria in the great Paris Exhibition. We took season-tickets, which enabled us to examine at our leisure the numberless objects of interest which were there displayed. The gold specimens were very fine, also the woods of the country; these latter surprised me by their exceeding beauty; they were almost as various as those of South America; one side of each block was highly polished, the rest left in its natural state. Of birds there was a fine collection, and till I saw them I fancied I was acquainted with most of the varieties in the colony; but I found to my surprise, that very many of the most gorgeous kinds were strangers to me, although our "friend" declared his own collection contained rarer and finer specimens. The wild flowers were very interesting to me, and many a lovely plant brought to my mind the enchanting spot where I had first seen it flourishing. There was a small number of oil-paintings, and some very good water-colour drawings; and to enhance the enjoyment of all these attractive things, a fine

organ, beautifully played, sent forth its deep rich tones at intervals during the day.

We were at the opening of the Theatre Royal, which is as large as Drury Lane. It is beautifully fitted up, and brilliantly lighted. The first performance was "The School for Scandal," in which Mrs. Charles Poole exhibited much talent. This was followed by the ballet; but almost the saddest sight I ever witnessed was that of a clever little child who played the "Actress of all work," and took six characters in succession. She was but nine years old! It was impossible for admiration not to give way to pity at the thought of the life of drudgery that must have been so early imposed on the poor little thing before she arrived at such perfection in all her parts. What could she have known of merry careless childhood with its simple pleasures? The noisy plaudits of strangers were her only reward for over-wrought powers of mind and body; but even this is not all—what can the future of such a child be?

Catherine Hays was turning the heads of the Melbournites at the Queen's Theatre. Her singing and acting gave the most unbounded pleasure, which was testified by showers of nuggets, sovereigns, and bouquets which every time she performed fell at her feet. It was said that she made eight hundred pounds a night. However, it is pleasant to know that she is very charitable, freely giving when any opportunity occurs.

Our gaieties were rather suddenly put a stop to by our friends' anxiety to return home in consequence of the frightful and exaggerated reports, which were daily arriving in rapid succession from the country, of an outbreak at Ballarat, where, it was said, the camp had been burnt down, and one of the officers wounded. Hearing that the whole of the 40th regiment was to go up immediately in battle array, we went down to a bend in the road to see them on their way. I think I never saw a more joyous party: they reminded me of happy schoolboys bound for some party of pleasure, yet kept in unwilling restraint by the eye of the master. The sailors from the man of war were more demonstrative, many were bestriding the guns, and otherwise testifying their satisfaction at the prospect of a fight. We drove on towards the barracks, where a different scene awaited us. The women and children, who had turned out to see the departure of their husbands and fathers, were weeping and bewailing their sad lot in not being allowed to follow them, and kind people were doing their best to console, seemingly to no purpose, these disconsolate ones. It was, however, a comfort to know that their trials were not aggravated by having poverty to bear as well as loneliness.

Every hour the reports became more and more alarming. *One* seemed so probable that the whole city was thrown into a state of commotion. Five hundred

diggers, it was said, were on the road to Melbourne, well-armed, and hoping to meet the troops before they arrived at Ballarat. There was a narrow pass on the road, which, if properly defended, was almost impregnable, and there they were to fall upon the soldiers, trusting that, fatigued by long and rapid marches, they would be easily overcome. This accomplished, they were to march upon Melbourne, where they expected to be joined by the dregs of the population; and finally they intended to take the Treasury and the Banks, and pillage the city! In this state of anxiety we remained until the 99th Regiment came over from Tasmania, to protect us. Even then we were constantly alarmed by the breaking out of fires almost every night in the town; the police barrack was much damaged by fire, and several horses were burnt before the poor animals could be removed. These constant conflagrations, however, did infinite benefit to Collings Street, for a number of small wooden houses which disfigured the street were burnt down. By degrees, these disturbances were quelled, but not without leaving very sad results. Many lives were lost, and among the most lamented was an officer who was deservedly most popular in the place.

Once a week the usual lounge was to the Botanical Gardens, where the band of the 40th Regiment played,

attracting the beauty and fashion of Melbourne; and certainly the most wonderful toilettes were there exhibited. I do not think the ladies of New York could out-dress some of the fashionables there, yet I must confess that generally very good taste was combined with richness of attire.

The gardens, which are on the banks of the Yarra, are beautifully laid out, and a charming afternoon may be spent there in roaming about. The greenhouses contain some rare flowers and ferns. A large swamp, or pond, is the resort of quantities of water fowl, which are very carefully preserved, and are quite tame. The Aviary is worth a close examination—canaries, black-birds, thrushes, and bulfinches from England are there to be acclimatised. There is besides a large collection of animals both from Australia itself and other countries. The monkeys by their gambols attract the greatest number of admirers. The graceful emu did not seem to feel here the loss of liberty. The "*Clianthus Damperii*," or rose of the desert, was the supreme object of attraction the first day we went there, and while admiring its clusters of brilliant scarlet, we were so fortunate as to meet with a gentleman who had just returned from the expedition in search of Mr. Coultherd. He told us the country he passed through was most uninteresting, very sandy, and covered with *salt bush*, a shrub which is very fattening for sheep. The greatest difficulty they had to

BOTANICAL GARDENS.

encounter was the want of fresh water ; constantly they were tantalised by the sight of water, and rushing towards it in the hope of slaking their thirst, it almost always proved to be salt. They saw the *Clanthus Damperii* blooming in the deserts, and looking still more lovely from its being alone in its beauty.

CHAP. VI.

A FISHING PARTY. — CRINOLINE. — THE MINISTER'S WIFE. — ALONE IN THE BLACK FOREST. — A MEETING WITH BUSH RANGERS. — THE FIRST STEP TO EVIL. — TRIAL AND CONDEMNATION. — THE HUSBAND'S RETURN. — A CHILD OF THE SEA.

So much has been written and said against crinoline that I feel in duty bound to raise my feeble voice in its defence, and express my unbounded gratitude to it. Perhaps never has it before been honoured with the title of Life-preserver, yet such it certainly once proved to me. It was a bright sunny day, and we were out on one of our fishing parties with some pleasant friends. As I was as usual most eager for sport, I had accepted the invitation of an old friend to come into his boat, which was moored under a drooping tree as he was catching "no end of fish." I had but to walk across a fallen trunk which projected over the bank, to get into the boat, when, depending for support too much on a branch overhead, it gave way, and in an instant I was floating in deep water down the stream, my crinoline acting as a life-preserver; for up it went with my dress,

like a balloon, presenting, I have no doubt, a most ludicrous appearance. • My friend immediately pushed off to my assistance, caught my arms, and told me to jump into the boat, which I easily accomplished, my petticoat aiding me in the most extraordinary manner. Although I had been up to my waist in water and my under-garments were saturated, my dress was scarcely wet, owing I suppose, to the same friendly but much-abused crinoline! Being so far from home I was wondering what would become of me, the kind offer of the ladies that they should each give me some part of their own clothing not being quite practicable. However, a good-natured old lady took charge of me, and begging the gentlemen to prepare a couch of fern in the *mi-mi* which had been already erected for a resting-place, she took my wet garments off and wrapped me up in shawls; and while my things were drying in the warm sun, she sat near me and talked so pleasantly that I ceased to regret the little *contretemps* which had at first threatened to mar the day's enjoyment. I had been wishing for some time to hear from her own lips the account of her adventure with the bush-rangers, and without any solicitation on my part she anticipated my request. I feel I never can do justice to the dear old lady's description of this trying time. I often wish, as I recall that pleasant hour in the *mi-mi*, that I could have taken down her exact words, or that a painter had been there to perpetuate the beau-

tiful countenance which so often rises before me now as in fancy I wander back to that distant land with which so many pleasant memories are connected. Her white hair shaded a face of such heavenly calm and sweetness as is seldom seen but in pictures of saints, and her quiet dignified manner gave earnestness and point to every word she uttered.

"My husband," she said, "was not very long ago sent for to go to the diggings at ——, to take the duty of a Presbyterian minister whose health required his return to England. We purchased horses and a dray, and having stocked it with everything we might require, as well for our journey as for our use on arriving at a strange place, we set out with only one man to drive and take care of the horses. All went well until we reached the Black Forest, when one of our horses became very lame, so that it was impossible to proceed any further. We desired the man to take the horse to the nearest station, and endeavour to exchange it for a more serviceable one. Remaining on the road where a stream of people of all kinds were crowding up to the diggings would be madness, we felt; so we drove to a secluded part of the forest, and in a very lonely but lovely spot we formed our little encampment. Here we passed two happy days roaming about, admiring the many beautiful plants with which this sweet place abounds. Far from human voice or ken, my husband and I enjoyed the

luxury of solitude, which was the more refreshing to us, from our having but just quitted the noise and bustle of a city. Alas, it was only like the calm before a storm. On the morning of the third day, we were surprised by the appearance of a man on horseback, who entreated my husband to accompany him instantly to the death-bed of his father, whose agony of mind at his approaching death had induced his son to seek some one who could give him comfort in his last hours. This young man had ridden in this direction hoping that among those wending their way to the diggings a clergyman might be found; he had met our driver, who indicated our locality, and with the experienced eye of a practised bushman the young man had traced us. When he had finished his story, my husband's eye met mine; I had observed the changing expression of his face, and the deep shadows passing over it. His duty pointed the way, his love barred the path. 'Go, dear,' I said, 'I have no fear of remaining here for a few hours; remember your old favourite motto, *Ce que Dieu garde est bien gardé*. Your heavenly Master has a mission for you, *He* will be my safeguard.' The tears stood in his eyes, for I saw the fear of leaving me in utter loneliness was struggling in his heart with his sense of duty; so I just told him not to think of me; that the God whom he served would watch over me; then, with a blessing, which he in vain tried to articulate plainly, and a look I never can forget,

he mounted the only horse we had left, and was soon lost to my straining sight. When the sound of their horses' feet died away in the distance, and the stillness of death surrounded me, I sat down and cried very bitterly; for although I am an old woman, my love is as young and fresh as when I plighted him my troth in the old Kirk at home, and since then never has a cloud come over the sunshine of our married life, and this was our first parting! I was soon angry with myself for thus giving way, and sitting down on a fallen log, and taking my Bible, I read the beautiful 121st Psalm, and was comforted. Then I thought over all the events of my life. My youth had been one of trial, and even there I could trace the hand of God, like a golden thread sparkling in the web of life, turning my crosses into blessings either to myself or others; therefore why should I doubt now in this seemingly terrible extremity? Had I not been preserved when fever raged in my village home, carrying off many of my early friends? Had not many storms swept over me in vain? And at sea, had I not been saved when the terrible cry '*Fire! fire!*' broke in upon my slumbers? Yes, scathless I have passed through all these awful scenes, supported by His hand: was that hand shortened now that it could not save? These reflections brought back the usual tone of my mind, and I busily employed myself in lighting a fire, making some cakes, and preparing some little niceties for my

husband's tea, for I knew how he would enjoy a comfortable meal on his return. Thus in reading and these domestic cares I whiled away the day; but my heart grew cold when the lengthening shadows crept slowly on, and the birds one by one ceased their chirping, and still my husband came not. The breeze too died away, and the hush of night stole on. The moon in her quiet beauty soon came out, but not a sound broke the awful stillness. The feeling of desolation would have been terrible if I had not been able to raise my eyes and heart to the star-spangled sky, and feel that He who made all those glorious worlds was my Father and my God, that all power was His, and that it was this almighty Being who had promised never to leave nor forsake me. Truly, never in my life was I less alone than during those only too brief moments when I realized His presence with me.

“I knew how pained my dear husband would be if on his return at that late hour he found me up, so I got into the dray and lay down, and, contrary to all expectation, I slept well and soundly until the chattering of the birds awoke me at daybreak. Two days passed in hourly expectation of my husband's return, and still I was alone! How merciful it is that an impenetrable veil conceals the future from our anxious vision, for no courage or strength of mind could sustain us in fighting the battle of life, were our minds saddened and harassed by the knowledge of coming sorrows and

misfortunes. Hope, that beguiler of life's sorrows, has been mercifully given to us, and so strongly do we cling to its solace, that rarely is its influence on the human mind destroyed. Does not often hoping against hope cheer us on our weary way? Oh, yes! no one would really give up hope for the sake of a glimpse beyond the veil.

"The third day the sound of men's voices fell on my listening ears. It seemed the sweetest music I had ever heard. I started up to welcome my dear one, but my heart sank and a tremor came over me, when I found myself face to face, not with my husband, nor even our driver, but a total stranger, and a man, too, on whose countenance was impressed ferocity, desperation, and every evil passion. A second, and soon a third, stood by his side, and then the dreadful truth flashed across my mind, they were bushrangers, the terror of the colony; and I was in the power of these reckless men! Only for an instant did fear paralyse my feelings; the next the sweet words of promise sounded in my ears, 'The Lord himself is thy keeper, the Lord is thy defence on thy right hand;' then, with a courage not my own I looked into their faces and claimed their protection, telling them how and why my husband had been forced to leave me, and that I was anxious at the long delay; then I bade them think of their mothers and sisters in the land far away, and for their dear sakes assist one

who was placed in such a terrible situation. My appeal was not made in vain ; the rough men seemed touched, and one and all promised it should be as I had said : they would take care of me until my husband returned, and my property should be safe in their keeping. They then civilly asked me to give them something to eat, as they were almost starved, and they assisted me in preparing the meal of which they stood in need. Salt meat, damper, and tea were soon spread out before them, whilst all the time they treated me with the utmost respect and courtesy, asked many questions about England, and seemed perfectly acquainted with all that was passing in the colony. On leaving me they promised I should have tidings of my husband next day, and assured me that I might depend on their watching over me during the night, that no other persons should be allowed to come near my dray. Strange it was that I should now find comfort in those very men whom, a few hours before, I had looked upon with such intense horror ; but so it was. True to their promise, the next day a note from my husband was brought me ; he had been ill, but hoped in a few days to be able to join me, he was so happy to learn that I was well and protected by friends. *Friends!* could he but guess what they were ! Yet they *were* friends, and powerful ones too ; yet such as would have made him shudder. Not a word did he say of the long absent driver, and my mind now

sorely misgave me as to the poor man's fate, and I tried to find out from the man who brought the note, whether he knew anything of him, but he did not. He however, sat down near me, anxious, I could perceive, for conversation, and I, willing to return the kindness he had done me, spoke kindly and gently to him, thinking of all the arguments and persuasive words I could command to induce him to think seriously of abandoning the wild and lawless life he was leading, entreating him to look at the end, for sooner or later that must come. Attentively and respectfully he listened to me, and soon tears stood in his stern eyes, greatly softening their expression. 'It is a long time since I heard such words,' he said, 'and they bring back to my mind my young and happy days, when I was an honest man and a good soldier. Perhaps, ma'am, you would think better of me if you permitted me to open my heart to you, and tell you how I committed the murder for which I was transported, the wrongs I have suffered, my yearning for the forgiveness of my God, and my longing to be free from the bonds which tie me to my comrades. Indeed, if you knew the trouble of my mind, you could not help pitying me, for it is often greater than I can bear.'

"Poor man! I expressed my sympathy for him, and encouraged him to relate his sad story. He continued:

"Our regiment was quartered in Gibraltar, and being

a sober man and of good character, I was chosen to be one of our Major's servants. He was just married, and the young lady did all she could to make us happy. We had family prayers, and they were very particular about our going to church. Everything was entrusted to my care except the wine. I was a very sober man and never wished for more than my ration of wine; but our mistress often gave us some when she thought the rations were bad. One day the maid tempted me to try and open the door of the room where the quarter casks of wine were kept by means of a false key. For a long time I refused. Unfortunately, an officer's servant came with a note one evening when our people were out. We were out of our ration wine; I thought of the false key, went to the door, opened it, and, trembling like a thief, as I was, helped myself out of the first cask! The man in drinking it said, "This is your master's wine, I know." "Yes," I answered, "they often give us some." The next morning, when the bell rang for prayers, we all felt very uneasy. As for my part I was sick at heart, for my stealing and lying lay heavy on my soul. Whilst on my knees I solemnly swore I never would do the like again. Would that I had kept that oath sacred! But I grew hardened, and often went and stole the wine again. The end came sooner than we thought. The carriage was ordered to take my mistress for a long drive into

Spain; as the Major was on duty, I was desired to stay at home and take his horse when he came from his rounds. Before my mistress went she rang for me, and told me to bring a jug, for she knew our wine ration was out. How all this kindness stung me! It was very late when she returned; the Major was getting uneasy, for they were to dine out, so she had only a few minutes to get ready; yet she ran to the head of the stairs to ask if the coachman's dinner was nice and hot. Those were the last words I ever heard her say. The coachman was just finishing his dinner, when the maid came in and told me to get more wine, for she wanted some. The coachman, who was a very quiet man generally, got into a passion, and said he would stand this thieving work no longer, and if one drop more wine was taken he would tell, for we were shamefully wronging a kind and good master. The maid aggravated me, and after a few words more, I struck him with the cheese knife I was cleaning, and he fell dead at my feet! Horror and agony rooted me to the spot. I never intended to have killed him, for we were friends, and had been for many years comrades. It was not till I had been for some hours alone in my cell, in the old Moorish fortress, that I awoke to all the horrors of my situation. My dear murdered friend's face was ever before my eyes, with a sorrowful, reproachful look. I wished for death; I

prayed for it; and I cursed the woman who had tempted me. A court-martial was ordered to try me; the grief I felt for my poor dead friend swallowed up the shame I might otherwise have felt; and even the base conduct of the maid, who was the only witness against me, in trying to swear away my life by dreadful lies, had no effect upon me. I had borne such an excellent character that it did me good service; many proved that never had an ill word passed between the coachman and myself, and my poor master spoke so earnestly in my favour that a verdict of *Manslaughter* only was returned against me. When all was over, the Major came to my cell at my desire, and I confessed all to him: he alone knew that I was a thief, for that never came out in evidence against me. Then came the breaking off of all ties. This alone would have bowed down any spirit, but mine was already bowed to the dust. I was sent to England, herded with convicts, transported for life from home and friends, and if I was a sullen, sulky man, what wonder! I had no hope, and longed for death; but I was young and strong, and I knew that probably I should have to endure many, many years of torment. God only knows what the life of a convict is: curses, oaths, and worse, are the only words he hears! My dogged way displeased those over me. Punishment I suffered often, but the pain of body was nothing to the mingled feelings which were raging in

my heart. At last, a most severe flogging, which for once was not deserved, roused me, and I escaped to the bush. For years I have been like Ishmael—*my hand against every man, and every man's hand against me.* Hunted, and left for dead, I believe I am now forgotten. Oh! if I could find peace of mind at last, and be certain that my sins were forgiven!’

“All this was said in detached sentences, gasped out rather than spoken, whilst the iron man's frame quivered with emotion. When he paused, I put a Bible and some tracts I had by me into his hand, and entreated him to read and pray, assuring him that none had ever sought the Saviour in vain.

“Every day, until my husband came, some little token was left on the fallen tree on which I usually sat, to show that I was still guarded by my powerful friends, who never themselves intruded on me. The convict alone, to whom I had given the Bible, came to see me on my last day of solitude, to thank me, he said, and I hope he left the gloomy forest a happier man than when he entered it bent on robbery.

“My meeting with my husband was one of exquisite joy. After all our anxieties and fears to find ourselves once more together was a subject of praise and thanksgiving for the remainder of our lives. My dear husband had had his trials also, but was cheered by the hope that he had been able to render much service, both of a

spiritual as well as of a temporal nature to the family who had sought his aid.

“ After the first few moments of our joyful greeting, my husband was naturally much astonished at the protracted absence of the driver, and I saw that his fears took the same direction as mine had done. There was no choice, however, for us ; longer in that forest we could not stay, for our provisions would be exhausted ; and so we were obliged to try and reach the nearest station with our one horse. We waited till the next morning to rest the animal, and then set out very early, in order if possible to reach some place of shelter before night. By slow degrees we at last arrived at the station whither, nearly three weeks before, we had sent our lame horse to be exchanged. There we heard that our driver *had* been there, and had procured a fresh horse, but they knew nothing more of him, nor did we ; and from that time we never were able to find out anything certain of the poor man’s fate, though for some time we lingered in the neighbourhood, in hopes of his being still alive ; but as days and even weeks wore away, our hopes died too, and at last we set out to finish our journey, bidding farewell with chastened yet thankful hearts to a spot which had been to us one of so much danger and merciful preservation.”

I felt quite sorry when the dear old lady had finished her recital; yet, on looking in her face, such a painful expression lingered over it as showed that the terrible fortnight she had passed alone in the bush was too indelibly impressed ever to be effaced. I asked if she had ever heard anything of the convict since. She answered, "Yes; a dirty bit of paper with the words, '*I have found peace*,' was sent through the post-office at the diggings."

Finding that many gay doings were going on, we thought it would be a good time to show the gay city to our young friend, Miss R——; so we wrote to Castlemaine, and got the good doctor to convey a note to Mrs. R——, to remind her of her promise to pay us a visit, and bring her eldest daughter, whom I would gladly assist in choosing her trousseau. My husband and I laid out many plans for their amusement: as for myself, I candidly acknowledge, I expected to derive much pleasure from their visit. Putting aside my partiality for Miss R——, I was curious to watch the effects which were likely to be produced on a young girl, brought up as she had been, far away from the busy world, when the realities of which till now she had only read and heard were before her. There recurred to my recollection a story, the truth of which I have

every reason to believe, related to me by a friend who had lived in the Channel Islands. It was this: —

Near Alderney are some dangerous rocks, called *The Caskets*, which are of course uninhabited, except by the one family obliged to live there to take care of the lighthouse. At one time this family consisted of an old man and his wife, with their young daughter, who had never left her native rock. When she was fifteen, however, her parents thought it time for her to see the world, and accordingly arranged for her to spend some time with their friends in Alderney. Full of expectation, the maiden embarked in the boat which had conveyed the usual provisions to the Caskets, and in due time landed on a shore almost as bleak as the rock she had left; but kind though strange faces greeted her, and every object she gazed on filled her with astonishment: cows, horses, and carts were wonderful in her eyes; the most ordinary objects had an interest for this unsophisticated child of nature which her friends could scarcely understand. But after passing a week in gazing on these marvels, and in making acquaintance with her relatives, who all vied with each other in their endeavours to amuse the pretty little stranger, she suddenly begged to be allowed to return "*home.*" "*I do not like the world, let me go back.*" The poor girl pined for her solitary isle, round which the perpetually troubled sea dashes its heavy waves with such force

that the spray descends like rain on the top of the lofty lighthouse. Amidst this never ending war of elements Jeanette had been reared ; storms had rocked her cradle, the roaring sea had been her lullaby, and was still the sweetest music to her ears. In childhood it had been her playfellow ; in her more serious moods she loved to sit and watch it raging round her, and to think of the sweet words, "*Though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail,*" which made her feel so safe in gazing on that wild scene ; and now she longed to return to it, for nothing she had seen could at all reconcile her to any further absence from her much loved home. Accordingly, her parents were soon astonished by the unexpected return of their child, and entertained by the recital of all the strange things she had seen. Though they had sorely missed her, they thought *she* would never pine for her home whilst all that surrounded her was as yet so new ; but to their surprise they found that, in the cultivation of her little garden, her fowls and her pigeons, she soon forgot the feverish dream of her visit to the great world, and never looked on the distant line of coast without a feeling of joy that she was delivered from its pleasures and cares.

CHAP. VII.

COUNTRY FRIENDS. — LALLA BOOKH. — ALARM OF A RUSSIAN ATTACK. — TAKING A HOLIDAY. — “BOGGED.” — LALLAL FALLS. — VOLUNTEER BALL. — A DIGGER’S HONEY-MOON. — DOING THE WORLD.

Mrs. R—— and her daughter arrived, bringing with them many remembrances from our friends, which was very gratifying to us. My drawing-room was made quite gay with some handsome kangaroo mats prettily edged with crimson cloth, and exquisite fans made of the tail of the lyre bird. Amongst the game sent was a large wild turkey, which astonished our cook, whose ambition to do it justice was quite amusing, and I must say successful, for it was excellent.

Purchasing the trousseau was our morning’s amusement; my friends were surprised to find how easily everything was procured, and how quickly all orders were executed. The Melbourne tradespeople are particularly civil and attentive: the greatest difficulty I found was in matching trimmings for dresses, which the people at home seem to have entirely forgotten to send out, so

that buttons, fringes, and ribbons required a further hunting expedition.

In our rambles we visited the Public Library, which is a large handsome edifice of white sandstone. The vestibule contains some valuable engravings; the library is worthy of the building, and is fitted up with the most luxurious armchairs and sofas, accessories, no doubt, in heightening the enjoyment of an amusing book. The National Gallery and Museum are under the same roof; the latter contains a fine collection of native birds and animals.

One of the leaders of fashion sent us an invitation to a pic-nic, or rather *fête*, a style of party frequently given in Melbourne, and which always seems to be most successful. A steamer was in waiting to receive the guests, who were very numerous, and whose toilettes surpassed in richness, extravagance, but I must add, good taste, anything I had before seen for a morning costume. A band of music sent forth soft and lively strains whilst we steamed up the serpentine Yarra to the Survey Paddock, whose lovely solitudes soon echoed back the gay and joyous laughter of the merry groups. The sound of a bugle collected us together to take part in the archery just commencing. We had good shooting, and the handsome prizes which were presented by our hostess were keenly contested. My young friend, Miss R——, bore away a handsome bracelet as a token of her

prowess. She had entered into the gay scene around her with the happiness and playfulness of a child, perfectly unconscious of the sensation her beauty, grace, and innocence were creating. The prizes awarded, a sumptuous repast was then served up, and after rambling in parties until the sun set, we embarked once more, and, lighted by the moon, glided gently down the river, until we came to one of those lovely residences which adorn its banks. There we disembarked and entered the brilliantly lighted mansion of our entertainer, where we remained dancing until a late hour.

Our next piece of dissipation was a visit to the Theatre Royal, to witness the performance of the extravaganza of *Lalla Rookh*, which really delighted us. The scenery was very well got up, particularly in the last act, when the ambassadors from different courts come to demand the hand of the fair Lalla Rookh. Among them the Chinese ambassador made his appearance, which highly delighted some Chinamen in the pit, who could hardly contain their feelings at his dress of rich brocade, and attendants bearing handsome presents and chests of tea; but when some men, also dressed as Chinese, came in to *dance* before Lalla Rookh, the Chinamen rose up in great indignation, and in a body left the theatre! Peace was soon restored, and we were enabled to enjoy the closing scene, which was very effective. It represented the Peri's return to paradise. The golden pillars and

fretted work were quite fairylike ; I do not think that even in London this little entertaining piece could have been better got up.

The Mayor of Melbourne's fancy ball was attracting all attention, and great preparations were making to render it a splendid affair ; not a very difficult task in a country where money is so profusely lavished that it seems to have lost its real value. The ball was held in the Exhibition building, and was attended by a thousand persons, comprising all classes of respectable people. Many detectives were pointed out to me who were joining in the dances and looking like lambs. The mixture of persons was as curious as the dissimilarity in dress ; diamonds and jewels sparkled in profusion on the rich, whilst the most *bizarre* costumes were worn by the would-be fine. One lady's head-dress deserves recording : it was composed of beetle's wings, which, entirely covering her head, descended to her waist ; the effect produced was most grotesque, as may easily be imagined. *Queen Victoria, Catherine of Aragon, and Henry VIII.* seemed the favourite characters. My little friend, as a fairy queen, I thought quite the belle, and so also I am sure did her intended husband, who was also our guest. It was very late ere we returned home, for there were so many amusing characters whom we could never hope to see all collected again. Catherine Hayes was there, and a few evenings after we went to the opera to hear

her. It is really wonderful how well the public amusements are got up in this new country; something new and attractive is ever tempting the lovers of pleasure, and these places are full to overflowing. Jacobs, the Wizard of the North, was attracting crowds to another pretty little theatre, the Olympic; and the Cremorne Gardens and Vauxhall, like their namesakes in London, have their balls and fireworks for the million.

Yet, amid these daily rejoicings, the public mind seemed ill at ease, for constant whisperings were heard of the intentions of the Russians to make a descent on the city, which was not fortified, and but feebly garrisoned; so that it would not be a very hazardous affair, it was said, for them to land some night, spoil the Melbournites, and sail away by dawn of day.

One evening we were at a ball, five miles from the city, which was attended by most of the officials and the officers of the garrison. We were in the midst of enjoyment, when suddenly a pale face was seen entering the room; low whispers passed which overshadowed the listeners' features; the gentlemen crowded together; the music stopped, and the dancers gazed on each other in astonishment. What could it be? "*The Russians have landed!*" was the despairing cry; "a messenger had been sent off to inform the officials that guns had been heard, and were firing when he left; that an officer had gone down to Sandridge; that the troops

were under arms, and with the only officer with them were ready to march out of barracks." There was but one wish, one longing in that large assemblage — that was for home; but all the carriages had left after having deposited their freights, and even the chafing, anxious officials had but the option of waiting till sent for, or of walking five miles in a pitchy dark night in ball costume. Consternation and distress seemed at their culminating point, when loud hurrahs! were heard. Another messenger arrived with the cheering news that the report was a false one, and had been occasioned by a *feu-de-joie* from the *Great Britain* to celebrate her being taken out of quarantine. It was, however, difficult either for the gossips to resume the thread of their discourse, or the dancers the good spirits which had so suddenly deserted them, every one had been so thoroughly cast down that it was in vain the band played the most inspiring airs; every ear was strained to catch the first sound of the carriage wheels, and to be on the road home seemed the only relief for the panic-stricken company. Never were adieus so cheerfully spoken as on that memorable evening.

Tired with our incessant gaiety, we determined on taking a real holiday, and visiting the far-famed Ballan and Lallal falls. It was on a fine morning in September that we began our journey. Passing through the village of Flemington, we got upon a good macadamised road

leading through a number of well-cultivated farms; after which we came to the plains of Keilor—wide and open downs of some extent, with here and there low hills undulating the otherwise flat surface, and breaking the line of vision, for no trees are to be seen for miles. We crossed the marshes and dry beds of creeks, which were not only disagreeable and dangerous in themselves, but were rendered disgusting by the many skeletons of horses and bullocks which had miserably perished there, having been left to die when, from hard work and starvation, they were unable to fulfil their cruel owners' tasks. It really was a very sad sight, as well as an unpleasing one. Native companions in vast numbers were on the plains, keeping at a very respectful distance from the road. The — Inn is sixteen miles from Melbourne. Fortunately here the creek was dry, for in winter it is almost impassable; at all times it must be unpleasant, owing to the number of loose boulders which are strewed over the bed of the rivulet or *creek*. Some miles farther on the country assumed a different phase; well-wooded and timbered like a park, its beauty was undoubtedly enhanced by the contrast with the uninteresting drive we had had previously.

We stopped to lunch on the banks of a little creek, which tempted us by its loveliness. We ensconced ourselves in a fairy nook in a deep gully or ravine, with the fern-clad hills surrounding us, and watched the bright

plumaged birds fluttering lazily about amongst flowers as gorgeous as themselves. Most thoroughly did we enjoy the shade of the spreading trees near the cool water, whilst many of our party wished to prolong our stay in this elysium: but it was necessary to proceed, so, winding through long valleys, we came to the beautiful and richly-cultivated *Bachus' Marsh*. We fed the horses at one of the hotels at the furthest end of the village, and when they were refreshed we started up the hill which leads to Ballan. Ere long we reached the Pentland Hills, where we constantly stopped, entranced with the views which met us at every turn. Large masses of rock and cliff at times presented themselves, in their rugged grandeur contrasting most picturesquely with the sides of mountains covered by the richest cultivation. On, on we went, ascending the roughest of roads and the steepest of hills, till we came to *Pike's Hill*, when we found that the road, which we had deemed almost impracticable, was altogether surpassed by the hill which we had now to ascend. We were all forced to leave the carriages and walk up; even then, when we reached the summit, we found the road so bad that the horses refused to pull one of the carriages any further: and besides this the wheels were embedded in the mud, and night was closing in fast; therefore our only chance was to seek for assistance to *dig* out the unfortunate carriage. Some of the gentlemen of the party volun-

teered the toilsome service, and returned in a short time accompanied by three men with spades; and then, the whole party of gentlemen putting their shoulders to the wheel, we were soon *en route* once more.

We had not gone three miles when again we stuck fast in the mud, and so deeply that our release this time seemed hopeless. In this dilemma a bullock-train was espied in the distance; the gentlemen again went to beg assistance, and were glad to find that one of the party knew the driver; so he willingly came to our relief, and on seeing what our difficulty was, he attached two pair of his bullocks to our carriage, which was quickly drawn out of the slough; and then, slowly but surely, we wended our way to our destination, where we found a blazing fire and a capital substantial supper awaiting us. It was, however, very late, and we were all so fatigued with the day's adventures, that we resolved on remaining in our present quarters the next day. The sportsmen of the party rather encouraged us ladies in our laziness, as they were anxious to explore the country with their guns. Early in the morning they were afoot, and returned well pleased with their day's sport. The landrail and common green plover were among the number of birds shot.

Our drive to the Lallal Falls was indeed most interesting. At first the road lay through a wild forest country, where charming vistas through the dark trees

frequently called forth our admiration; many bits of the landscape would have made exquisite paintings. We had started in the early morning, before the sun was high, and so had all the benefit of the discordant sounds so proverbial in an Australian forest. Here I heard to perfection the laughing jackass pouring forth his mocking tones, as if in derision of the screaming cockatoos and magpies (unlike in plumage, but alike in habits, to their namesakes in the old world); the little *wattle-bird*, like a thrush in appearance, adding its shrill note to this unharmonious concert. The sun was now getting high, and scorchingly hot, making the shade of the *light wood* and *wild cherry* most acceptable. Under this umbrageous foliage we sat while the sportsmen, sure of finding the bronze-winged pigeon among the wild cherry trees, loaded their guns, and made the still air resound with their shots.

On reaching the neighbourhood of the falls, we were obliged to drive along the stream to find a safe place for crossing, as it was flooded by the late rains. It is an acknowledged fact, that when either places or persons are set up on a pinnacle for admiration, they never get their meed of praise; but it was not so with the Lallal Falls — to me at least; for I cannot find expressions strong enough to convey an idea of the style of their enchanting beauty. It is strictly Australian; sky, foliage, and tints are all peculiarly its own. The fall

is more than a hundred feet in height, and the rush of water very great, as it comes foaming over the granite rocks, whose forms assume shapes as fantastic as they are beautiful. From the still pool below, the angry water, as if gaining fresh strength from its temporary lull, tosses its white spray and pours down in a succession of waterfalls and cataracts for nearly a mile, when, as if wearied with its struggles in forcing itself through a granite mountain, it becomes quite still and calm, though sparkling and clear in a remarkable degree.

We walked up the mountain, wishing to get a more extensive view of this truly lovely waterfall. Boulders of various sizes covered thickly the surface of the mountain. We lingered for some time under the spreading gum-trees, listening to the gurgling murmur of the glittering torrent, till some of the gentlemen broke the spell by rolling the boulders down to hear the splash in the waters beneath, and then, enticing a harebrained friend to accompany them, descended to the pool and got under the fall. From our position above we could watch every step of their progress and were terrified at their temerity. To punish them, we were resolved not to notice the gesticulations they made indicative of their success. They looked like little pigmies, rendered very ridiculous by their absurd antics, their voices being drowned in the deafening sound of the gushing waters.

Very much pleased with our visit, it was now time to make preparations for the start homewards. We accomplished the return journey in less time than we took to come up, as the rain had ceased for some days, and in this climate a short time suffices to dry the roads and render them fit for traffic.

When near the inn at Bachus' Marsh we were entertained by a very good exhibition of "*buckjumping*." One of the gentlemen had just mounted, and the horse, not liking his rider, made use of every vicious trick to get rid of him, but in vain; the gentleman was in no way disconcerted, and sat him well. At length the brute, fixing his head between his forelegs, and curving his back nearly into the shape of a ball, threw up his tail, and making at the same time a spring and a jump, he slid completely through the girths, pitching his rider, who was clinging to the saddle, on the ground, where he sat for some moments in mute astonishment at the singular cleverness of his unruly steed.

We arrived in Melbourne late the same day, and on entering the town encountered one of those terrible dust-storms which fortunately are not of very frequent occurrence. The wind setting in from the north brings with it a heat which is insupportable, resembling the hot fumes of a furnace; and the dust with which it is charged obscures the sun's rays, blinds the eyes, fills the throat, and whirling about in the most impetuous

manner leaves thick deposits everywhere. It was indeed a contrast to the pure balmy air we had been breathing, and did not make us in love with the great city.

We had intended taking our friends to the races the next day, but we could not encounter the dust-storm, so spent the day more to my taste in sitting quietly at home and talking over the pleasant days we had spent together.

The Victoria Volunteer Rifles got up a ball, in aid of the Patriotic Fund, in the Exhibition-building, to which we thought we ought to go; and certainly I have seldom seen a prettier ball. It was well got up in all its parts, the building was adorned with flags, and fountains played all night. Three military bands alternately sent forth their inspiring music, and the supper was laid out in the galleries in a style which would not have disgraced a London artiste. Thirteen hundred persons were present; many had evidently never been to a ball in their lives before, and the attempts at trying to dance which we witnessed were most amusing as we looked down from the galleries to watch the novel sight. Detectives were gliding about with eyes everywhere, yet it was wonderful how orderly the strange mixed crowd was; there was nothing to find fault with but awkwardness and bad style of dress. Such a ball

could not, I should think, have taken place in England, and have gone off so quietly.

One of our favourite rides was to the beautiful little village of Heidelberg, about eight miles from Melbourne. It is quite like a little English hamlet, with the spire of its small church rising up among the trees, and surrounded by neat cottages, with their highly cultivated gardens and fields. Near it there are some beautiful houses belonging to different gentlemen, giving the whole a rich, comfortable, and thriving appearance. The finest vegetables come from this neighbourhood, and supply the Melbourne market; melons and vegetable marrows almost grow wild in this rich soil. One day, on our ride back from this lovely spot, a sad spectacle met our eyes. Lying on the roadside was a person dressed in the extreme of fashion, and bending over her was a man, apparently in great distress of mind, piteously entreating her to answer him, but she was quite motionless. We stopped, and my husband, dismounting, endeavoured to aid the man in raising the prostrate woman, who we soon discovered to be helplessly drunk. It was only the old story over again: he was a lucky digger, who in the flush of his good fortune had proposed to the first handsome woman he met; brought her down to Melbourne; given her everything she could desire; taken her to every place of amusement, and allowed her to

drink as much champagne as she pleased. The weather was sultry, the wine nice and sweet; hence the consequences we witnessed. They had spent ninety pounds in three days! Luckily, an empty carriage was passing, and for a large bribe the driver allowed the woman to be placed in it with her husband, a quiet, sober-looking man, who already seemed to repent having been so hasty in choosing a wife. Alas! what prospect of happiness was there for such an ill-assorted couple? Little did he think, poor man, when first the glittering nugget caught his eye, and he felt his toil was over, that he was gazing on that which would embitter his future life! And is the poor digger's case a singular one? Are we not frequently treading the same path? Forgetting the Hand which bestows or withholds the good we desire, do we not often covet some position or long for some dearly-prized object, undervaluing the blessings we possess, and praying for those which it has not pleased God to give us? And sometimes are we not punished by the very granting of our request, and do we not then find by bitter experience that we are not the best judges of our wants?

One day my husband brought home to dinner an American gentleman, a native of South Carolina, who

was "*doing the world.*" We frequently hear of "doing" the Pyramids, Norway, or the Rhine, or other small journeyings; but there was something so grandiloquent in the very sound of "doing" the *world*, that I looked with a feeling almost approaching to awe on the man whose lofty aspirations had led him to undertake so vast an enterprise, even in this age of "travel made easy." His appearance, however, was certainly not calculated to impress any one in his favour, and in a short time I found my exalted ideas of our guest oozing out gradually. He was a dark, Jewish-looking man, with an expression in his large black eyes of more than shrewdness; it amounted to unpleasant cunning. He was got up to a wonderful extent, considering that the only luggage he travelled with was a leathern bag slung over his shoulder by a silver chain; therefore I ought to have been more charitable than to allow my woman's eyes to pry into the secrets of his toilette; but the clean collar fastened with a monster white pin on the soiled shirt, whose front was decorated with sparkling ruby studs, and the large gold chain round his neck, so attracted my gaze that the false wristbands with their jewelled buttons nearly escaped my attention, and I wished they had more concealed hands evidently for some time strangers to soap and water, but covered with rings, rendering the jet tinted points of the fingers more conspicuous. Bunches of little charms and tiny souvenirs were suspended from

the ponderous chain. To each of them, he informed us, was attached some tale. His loquacity soon displayed the idol *self*; he told of all the places he had visited in an incredibly short time; he had done London in three days, the rest of England in proportion, viewing it from the railway carriage; Ireland, from the Giant's Causeway to Killarney, in a week! After the run through Europe, Egypt and the Pyramids had been visited; then Syria, Persia, and India; and he wound up his peroration by boasting that he had never met a man who could take him in; he was "too sharp, yes, too sharp." Really wishing to understand this, to me, most uncommon character, I volunteered to accompany my husband and him in their ride after dinner. We took him to see the most remarkable objects likely to interest a traveller. To my utter surprise he seemed quite satisfied with the names of the places pointed out; a slight cursory glance was all he bestowed on the loveliest view or the finest building. I was at length fairly puzzled, and resolved to know his secret for the acquirement of knowledge at so railroad a pace; so, by dropping in a word here and there, and slyly stirring up his vanity, my perseverance was rewarded, and he confessed that his intention on reaching Carolina was, *to read up the guide books*, and write his adventures. He had really seen the places, and that was quite enough for him. His object was to accomplish his journey in the shortest time possible; accord-

ingly one month was allotted to the Australian colonies, and in that time he was to visit every available spot on this vast continent! I wonder if, when smoking his cigar in his sunny house in South Carolina on his return, and chewing the cud of sweet and bitter memories, he ever confessed to himself in his heart of hearts that *he* had been done occasionally, and had met with those sharper than himself. I am convinced he must have done so, for I never yet met with persons so confident in themselves, that they did not become a very easy prey, so completely are they at times thrown off their guard by their vanity.

A most amusing exemplification of this took place some years ago, when I was travelling with my father in Spain. On our way to Granada, we spent a day with an English Consul, who, seeing me putting up a book very carefully in my small travelling bag, asked me what it was, and on looking at it laughingly told me to leave it behind. I inquired why, and he then told us that the author had been his guest, and finding that he was endeavouring in an underhand manner to gain information, and that he jotted down slyly all he could pick up without endeavouring to sift its truth, the Consul and his friends amused themselves by relating to him the most absurd tales of brigandage, &c., which, as they expected, afterwards appeared in print. Opening the book as he spoke, he read out the passages to which he alluded.

CHAP. VIII.

VISIT TO SETTLER'S HOME.—NATIVE COMPANIONS.—A SOLDIER'S WIFE.—KANGAROO HUNTING.—THE EMUS.—ENGLISH DEER.—LOLA MONTEZ.—A SURLY SEA CAPTAIN.—THE OPERA.

WE started on a bright sunny morning for our promised visit to Mr. G——, who had sent down his carriage for us. It was a kind of low mail phaeton, very comfortable, strong and easy, just the vehicle for the roads it had to traverse. It was drawn by a pair of stout staunch horses. Our way led through Richmond, a part of Hawthorne, a pretty little village, with its church perched on the hill above the river Yarra; then past Kew; after which we got into the open country. We were in great spirits at getting away from the heat of the city, for it was early in December, and very hot, and the cool breeze which met us blew most refreshingly in our faces, reminding us of our Castlemaine roving. The road was not a good one, but our skilful driver managed his horses so adroitly that we did not meet with any accident, although more than once we were in peril of an upset. It was very late when we caught sight of Mr. G——'s house, which was situated on an eminence

overlooking the spreading plains. It was a singularly lovely spot, and from the wide verandah a most glorious prospect met the eye. The river Yarra runs within a mile of the house, and glistens in the distance like a silver thread, as the sunlight falls on its tortuous course through vistas which nature herself has made, seemingly to bring it into view, for its banks are densely shrouded with trees and under *scrub*. A girdle of lofty mountains, wooded to their very summits, encircles the plain, forming a basin where every beauty of landscape is concentrated. There is nothing to equal Australian hospitality in the bush, nor can anything be more delightful than the life the settlers lead. They really seem freer from care and anxieties than those living in great cities; they make the best of what they possess, care very little who is greater and richer, and have no Mrs. Grundy watching their movements. How often the fear of what the world may say paralyses our most innocent intentions! Indeed, much of the *malaise* of our life has its root of bitterness in this slavish terror, which hinders the many from daring to be themselves.

The morning after our arrival we rode to see a *mob* of horses which had been driven into the yard. It was to us a novel and interesting sight. The men were armed with stock whips (peculiar I believe to the country), having very short handles richly mounted with silver, and exceedingly long lashes, with which they have the

knack of producing sounds which I could not then compare to anything I had ever heard before. The *mob* consisted of two hundred horses, most of them nearly wild, and all untrained. There were some very fine Arabs amongst them which took my fancy greatly, but all were well bred, as inferior horses do not pay. We spent the greater part of the day in admiring the large number of handsome animals which were being selected from the herd.

Riding home on the plains, we frequently reined in our horses to watch the movements of flocks of native companions who had congregated there. This species of stork has a remarkable and gay plumage, and it was quite impossible to restrain our laughter at their ludicrous gambols. It required very little stretch of the imagination to fancy them gaily dressed school-girls, rejoicing in a holiday, and mimicking the airs and graces of their dancing master, bowing and saluting each other in the most ridiculous though graceful manner; then, as if some sudden whim had possessed their giddy little heads, breaking up the dance, they frisked about as if playing some fanciful game. They possess a wonderfully quick eye, and see as well as hear at a very long distance. They seem to be made pets of, and are rarely, if ever, molested.

Early next morning we were again on our horses, for a long ride of twenty miles, to a very pretty station.

We had to wend our way through the mountain ranges, where the scenery, if possible, surpassed in grandeur of feature and quiet loveliness anything we had before seen. Spell-bound, we stopped to feast our eyes on bold masses of rock, with giant trees rooted in their clefts; then descended into glades richly carpeted with flowers, whilst luxuriant ferns kissed the cool streams as they trickled down from the mountain side, and, rippling soft and clear, made the silence of the solitude felt. The birds and flowers (always objects of admiration in ~~an~~ Australian ride) did not differ from those we had previously seen at the Avoca or Castlemaine. It was very pretty to see the flying kangaroos start from the sides of the hills, where they had been reposing, basking in the sun, until startled by our near approach, and quickly disappear again among the thick underwood. So much had there been to charm us during our morning's ride that we were quite fresh when we dismounted at the door of the pretty cottage, where our horses were to have a rest and we were to lunch.

Everything here reminded us of *Merrie England*. The family had brought with them their neat English ways, and had transformed their mountain land into an English dairy farm. So neat, so nice were all the arrangements, that the farm would not have lost in comparison with some of the show dairies of the mother country. Sixty cheeses ranged on the shelves of

the cool apartment allotted to them, with a large quantity of delicious butter, were the proceeds of the last week, and were to be sent down to Melbourne market, where a ready sale for all such produce is obtained at very remunerative prices. The hospitality we experienced was truly Australian, for in that term is comprised an abundance of the best of everything which the place affords, with such a hearty welcome that you feel quite at home. If we had a fault to find it was that they never thought we had eaten enough.

The old grandmother, as she sat in her arm chair, was a picture in herself. There had been much beauty in her face, but the fair brow was now marred by deep lines of care, stamped so indelibly in early youth that the prosperity of after life had never effaced their traces. With the usual garrulity of age, she discoursed on what memory ever makes most vivid — her early days, when she followed her husband to Spain, and was often an eye-witness of the glorious deeds performed by our army, and a sharer in the horrors and privations of the battle-field. Her first campaign was the retreat from Corunna: this she described with a pathos so thrilling that the recital haunted me for days. Human nature shrinks from contemplating the excessive fatigue, cold, and starvation which these devoted women endured at that dreadful time, cheered on solely by love. Graphically she described the walking on, on, for days over

broken-up roads,—the wading through rivers where the chilled limbs became painfully benumbed by the freezing and dripping garments, — and, worst of all, the wailings of her tiny babe, whose moans she could not still. Then came the end, the battle, when, from a height she saw “the regiment engaged,” and flung herself down in despair to pray for the life of her husband, as every volley sounded on her heart as his death-knell. Then she told how the shades of night covered at last the battle-field and its horrors; and of the hasty embarkation in darkness and silence, more awful from the previous din of strife; of the gazing into each face as it came up, and pining for the look of love that never met the longing eye; for each one in that night had been so separated from the rest that it was not until the shores of England were gained that the fate of any but those in the same ship could be ascertained: then in the embrace of her husband she forgot the past.

It is the fashion to look down on soldier's wives, and to consider them as women of the lowest rank. Never perhaps have a set of beings been more cruelly misrepresented. Exceptions there must be everywhere; but remember their temptations when you harshly judge. In general they are endowed in a very high degree with a spirit of endurance, unselfishness, and devotion to their husbands and children; acts of kindness and

charity one towards another, are hourly called forth; the adoption of the orphan into a family already large and burdensome is of frequent occurrence; deeds which in private life would be chronicled, are passed by here, and no one guesses what a bright jewel the care-worn, tramping, soldier's wife carries in her heart of hearts; she acts her religion by doing her duty in that state of life unto which she has been called, although, poor soul, she never gets credit for it.

On our way home we fell in with some natives and stopped to have a talk. They quite astonished us by speaking English with great fluency. They have been very unfairly described as loathsome beings, and I cannot agree with those who imagine that they can never be civilised.

The kangaroos that we saw herding so thickly on the hills made us quite wish for a hunt; so the next morning, taking with us the only dog to be had, we set out early for the hills. We had no difficulty in finding our game, for we saw hundreds, but only killed one. I am proud to say I was in at the death, and a more exciting run it would have been impossible to have had. I can quite imagine kangaroo-hunting to be nearly equal in interest to fox-hunting in England. The instinct which the dog displayed was extraordinary. While one of our party was occupied in skinning the slain animal, I and some others turned our attention to

the panting dog and offered it water. It was interesting to watch the caution of the animal; he lapped first quietly and gently, as if he dreaded the shock from the cold water; then he lay down, and after a few minutes lapped again; again he reposed some minutes, and then rolled himself on the ground, seeming to enjoy himself most thoroughly, then ran to his master and looked up in his face, as if quite ready for another run; so on we went. I was riding in advance of my party, anxious to be the first to start the game; the deep shade which the hills threw on the spot, as well as the nature of the ground, rendered it likely that we might be successful; my horse's feet fell softly and noiselessly on the thick moss, when suddenly up bounded two immense kangaroos and stood at bay, staring at me with their large brown eyes. For a moment my heart quailed beneath their gaze, but fortunately the clattering of the horses' feet and the noisy mirth of the party coming up scared away the animals, who started off, taking tremendous leaps. In spite of my fright, I could not help admiring the beauty of their heads, and their perfect gracefulness. This little adventure proved a good lesson to me, for I did not again attempt to ride alone any distance from the party.

Each day we spent at Mr. G——'s was varied by some new ride or boating excursion. We often took our

luncheon, sketch-books, and work, and ensconced ourselves in some pretty nook, while the gentlemen roamed about the surrounding country with their guns, and shot quantities of quail and bronze pigeons, of which there were abundance in that neighbourhood. Then on their return we plucked the birds and cooked them before a bush fire, with the everlasting tea-kettle as an accompaniment, and did not leave our sylvan retreat until the setting sun warned us to depart. Here for the first time I saw snakes: a small one was shot by one of our party, and shortly after, whilst crossing a swamp, my horse was nearly treading on another, when however he suddenly jumped aside and avoided it. The horses here particularly dislike snakes, and show great uneasiness when in their vicinage.

In the early mornings I used to devote myself to the pets, which are always congregated round a settler's house, and I tried to make myself agreeable to some emus, which were becoming very tame and great pets. They were tall, majestic, and remarkably graceful birds, with dark grey plumage, more resembling fine hair than feathers. The neck and legs were very long; I thought the head too small, but that fault was redeemed by the most beautiful brown eyes, almost human in their expression. The emu runs so swiftly that it is almost impossible to capture it, and it is so fierce when excited that one of its kicks will break a

man's leg. Its eggs are of a brilliant dark green, and so peculiarly handsome that they are frequently mounted in gold or silver. My great amusement was in offering to Mr. G——'s emus the most indigestible substances, which they greedily devoured. Their voraciousness is so great, that one of them, we were assured, had swallowed a silver spoon which had been left in its way. The natives have great faith in emu fat, which they say cures rheumatism and every ache and pain. The *emu-wren* is a little brown bird, having in its tail three long feathers of a peculiarly light hairy look; its note is a singularly melancholy cry, which we often heard on the banks of the Yarra at certain seasons of the year. The *kingfishers* as well used to delight us, and many times I have sat watching them, as their brilliant plumage flashed in the sun, as they flew past us. The wild black duck is easily tamed, and makes a nice pet. It will come out of the water when called, and waddle up to be fed: not so the black swan, which is equal in size and gracefulness to our white ones, and, I may add, in beauty also, for the red beak contrasts favourably with the black glossy feathers. In revenge for their savage propensities, our friend the bird fancier had no scruple about shooting them, so they afforded us many a good feast, as they are excellent, when dressed like wild duck, with port wine sauce.

In one of our rides we came upon some deer which had been brought out from England, and seemed to be thriving well and enjoying their novel pasturage. It was a strange sight to find them grazing on one hill, while on the opposite one the true proprietors of the soil, the kangaroos, were quite within view of the intruders. We rode on the same day to the pretty dairy station, having promised a parting visit to its hospitable occupants, while the gentlemen, taking advantage of our having a resting place, went off to the hills to shoot, and called for us on their return. They were quite elated with their day's sport — quail, black ducks, and landrails, being most numerous. The latter we found very good eating; but I cannot say as much for the kangaroo soup, which did not suit my palate, although it was said to be well made; the flesh is coarse and never eaten by white people. On our way home I purchased a small tame opossum from some natives. It knew me very soon, and became the most affectionate of little pets, following me everywhere, and never happy but by my side.

At length our delightful visit terminated, and with many sighs and regrets for the kind hearts we were leaving, and taking a long lingering look at the beautiful landscape we should perhaps never see again, we drove away in our kind host's carriage. In a few hours we were overtaken by one of those sudden storms

which seem to delight in surprising and perplexing unfortunate travellers. It thundered and lightened the whole way down to Melbourne, whilst the torrents of rain were such as one only sees in the tropics. Our horses were well trained, and so accustomed to these violent bursts of nature, that they seemed to go all the steadier, notwithstanding that the sky was one blaze of fire, and the loud ringing peals of thunder deafening to human ears. It was, to say the least of it, a very disagreeable position for us to be in, and never did my dear home look so comfortable as when I found myself once more safe within its walls. We found our writing-table covered with invitations, to four grand balls,—one a fancy one,—all given by the leading members of government, and to dinner-parties innumerable, from the large and ceremonious to the quiet and friendly.

The first of our gaieties was to witness an amateur performance at the theatre by the officers of the garrison. The house was crowded to excess. Catherine Hayes was there, cheering on by her plaudits the novices in her art. But the person who most attracted my attention, was the late celebrated Lola Montez. Her beauty was startling; her eyes, especially, were so remarkable that I forgot almost to notice the other features of the handsome face. She had on a bonnet, so that I could not see her hair. I heard that she had been acting in Melbourne, but no ladies went to see her. The first time

she appeared a gentleman laughed at some speech she made, upon which she turned towards him and lectured him, and so bitter were the words she used that the poor man was greatly discomposed; yet, notwithstanding his confusion, she went on, and so worked on the feelings of her auditors in the pit (where the unfortunate object of her sarcasm was trying to hide himself), that at last they lifted him up bodily, and pushed him in no gentle manner out of the house. Had such an affair occurred at Ballarat the consequences might have been much more serious.

We had a dreadful drive returning from the theatre, for which we were prepared, however, as even whilst there it thundered and lightened to such a degree that the roar of the tempest was fearfully audible above the loud applauding of the spectators, and many persons imagined that an earthquake had shaken the building. Since coming down from Castlemaine we had felt two shocks, the first was a severe one, and occurred in the dead of the night; the second was a slighter one, and awoke us just before daylight.

My poultry yard was a constant source of amusement to me, and I made it quite my study, so that at last I could boast of the healthiest and most productive birds in the colony. Poultry in Australia requires the

greatest cleanliness; every week the fowl houses must be whitewashed, and plenty of fresh water given every morning to the fowls; also the water must be shaded from the sun that it may be cool, for I always found it injurious to the fowls to drink water which had been left to get heated by the sun's rays. In damp weather they used to have warm food once a day. The wheat which was given them was always steeped in water for one night previously. I always doctored my own fowls, but Miss Watt's book, "The Poultry Yard," was invaluable to me, and was at first my guide, until experience regulated my remedies. I invariably found that the half-bred *Cochins* throve best in Melbourne, and were the healthiest, with perhaps the exception of the *Friesland*, for they lay incessantly, and are good birds for the table. The *Spanish* came next, but the *Dorkings* I never succeeded in rearing. I fancy the climate is too dry for them, as they require moist ground. My fowl-crochet was by no means a contemptible one, for my table was always well supplied when very ordinary chickens were selling in the market at twelve shillings a couple, and eggs were five or six shillings a dozen.

The extraordinary rise of some of the people in Melbourne was often to me a subject of astonishment. We met at one of our grand dinner parties a gentleman who had come out as a poor workman, and had actually plastered the very room we were sitting in; but by his

industry and upright conduct he had not only amassed sixty thousand pounds, but had acquired the respect of his fellow citizens, and was one of the most rising men in the colony. This was not by any means a solitary instance, for I could not even count the numbers of persons who, from time to time, were pointed out to me as having been even more successful. A steady perseverance in pursuing the profession selected, always accompanied by the strictest integrity, is the sure means of making a fortune in Melbourne.

So irregular were the mails about this time, that the town was thrown into great commotion by the refusal of the captain of a ship, just arrived, to give the newspapers he had of a much later date than any in the colony. He had touched at the Mauritius where the cholera was raging; so on his arrival he was put in quarantine, and for this he was determined to revenge himself. Persuasions and flattery were alike unavailing, and he still more aggravated the people by declaring that he was in possession of most important news, and hinting that England was at war. As the hours wore on, the excitement assumed a more positive form, and a proposition to blow up the ship and her headstrong captain might have been carried into execution, had not a ship, with later intelligence, come to anchor and put an end to the strife. Contempt then took the place of indignation, when it was discovered that no news of any im-

portance could be contained in the newspapers so pertinaciously withheld. As may be imagined, the detention of the mail was the cause of frequent scenes of this kind, and reports, as absurd as they were false, were in constant circulation; yet, strange to say, they gained credence with the many in spite of their very great improbability.

I was very anxious to witness the opening of Parliament, which was about to meet, and being offered tickets we went very early, as we had been advised to do, and fortunately were accommodated in the Lords' seats; this gave us a good view of the house, which was densely crowded. The ladies were brilliantly dressed in every colour of the rainbow; their Parisian bonnets were faultless, and their toilettes in every way unexceptionable. ~~There~~ I had quite time enough to admire before the entrance of His Excellency the Governor, upon which the House rose, and all the usual forms were gone through as strictly as they would have been at home. His Excellency was dressed in the Windsor uniform, the President was on his right, and the General commanding on his left, the Staff standing behind his chair. The effect of the whole was imposing: the bright uniforms of the officers and the gay dresses of the ladies relieved the sombre hue of the gentlemen's habiliments, and harmonised with the white and gold with which the interior of the building was profusely decorated. The

outside was still unfinished, but it promised to be a magnificent structure. •

Public buildings are rising up everywhere in this wonderfully progressing city, the colonists striving with a very laudable ambition to vie with the great capitals of Europe; and when money is abundant and freely given, and the work entrusted to men of talent, it will not be surprising if their endeavours to create a magnificent city are crowned with complete success, for even at the present time it is a most desirable residence.

In the establishment of an opera the Melbournites have been equally befriended by fortune. Madame Anna Bishop and a staff of clever artists have succeeded in riveting the attention of the mixed crowds which throng the theatres, and the beautiful gems from the favourite operas have been listened to by them with the same entranced pleasure only called forth generally in highly cultivated tastes. The encouragement so liberally awarded to genius has, in a great measure, been the means of fostering this predilection for good music, for it has tempted some of the stars to shine in this hemisphere, and has given a tone which is not likely to be lowered by inferior performers. The greatest treats of this kind to me were the concerts of the Philharmonic Society which were held at the Theatre Royal, under the patronage of the Governor and General commanding. The selections from Handel's oratorios were given with

taste and delicacy ; nor was I less pleased with the performance of the *Stabat Mater*, *St. Paul*, and *Elijah*. The organ was a fine one, and the complete hush of the crowded audience proved how much these divine compositions were appreciated. Many of the performers were amateurs, but Madame Anna Bishop's exquisite singing gave a sparkling zest to these charming concerts ; and I must ever consider that it was a great privilege that in this far-off land we had such an amount of gratification.

CHAP. IX.

CHRISTMAS DAY.—THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.—THE BIRTHDAY BALL.
—A GRAND BAZAAR.—THE ENVIRONS OF MELBOURNE.—INTEL-
LECTUAL AMUSEMENTS.—THE FINE ARTS ASSOCIATION.

CHRISTMAS DAY in the antipodes, where every law of nature is reversed: How difficult to realise it when memory, busy with the past, is picturing to the mind such different scenes; the dear village church draped in its winter robe of brilliant snow—its frosted ivy wreaths glittering in the sun; the red-cloaked old women thronging round the porch, exchanging kindly greetings, and giving the hand of fellowship and smile of love to those who during the past year might have been coldly looked upon for some fancied slight; then the solemn hush of the old church, mantled in living green and gay with bright coloured holly-berries; the deep tones of the organ pealing forth the Hallelujah Chorus, raising the wandering thoughts beyond the earth, and fitting the mind to follow the solemn services of the day, as we knelt beside those we loved the best. Yes! a Christmas abroad is a day of sad remembrance, pass it as you will.

Our Christmas day at Melbourne was ushered in by a blazing sun and a hot wind, scorching, as if with the breath of a furnace, the shrubs and flowers, which drooped their heads as the heated blast swept by, and all nature wore an air of suffering. The sight, however, of our breakfast table dispelled our gloomy thoughts, for there were piled many Christmas gifts, reminding us of the numerous blessings we still enjoyed, and that amongst them we could number the greatest and rarest on earth—true-hearted and loving friends. We rowed down the river to church, as we thought the cool shade of the spreading trees overhanging the water would be pleasant, and in the evening some friends joined us in endeavouring, by the help of roast beef, plum pudding, and mince pies, to cheat ourselves into the belief that it was Christmas day, while the heat of the atmosphere compelled us to put our handkerchiefs to our faces continually in a very unaristocratic fashion. Happily this intensity of heat is not continuous, for although one day the thermometer may rise to 116° Fahrenheit, the next day it may be down to 60°, or even less; and we have often had a fire in the drawing-room the very day after one of those frightfully hot evenings.

During the hot months, when the heat became too fierce to allow us to go out during the day, it was very delightful to row in the twilight to the Survey Paddock, and float down the stream home again, amusing our-

selves meanwhile by singing duets and glees,—or we enjoyed the balmy evenings sitting in our verandah, and listening to the bands of music performing at the Cremorne Gardens, whose softened strains came echoing over the water, awakening many a pleasing recollection. On gala nights we had quite a glimpse of fairy land: the sky was brilliantly illumined with fireworks, which shed their fantastic sparkling light on trees and shrubs, tipping them with rays of the brightest colours, while their dark outline stood out against the blazing sky, presenting a foreground of unearthly beauty. Cremorne boasts that her display of fireworks equals that of her London prototype, Vauxhall; but where can be the difficulty of out-rivalling *anything*, if desired, in a country where money is so abundant that its value seems scarcely felt?

The Queen's birthday is always a gala day in the colonies. Her Majesty has no truer or warmer hearts on her own shores than amongst the exiled ones in distant lands, who, brimful of loyalty, delight in celebrating the Royal birthday with every honour. Loud and long are the cheers sent forth, and sincere and heartfelt are the wishes expressed for the prosperity of our beloved Queen.

The hot wind was blowing, and a dust storm was threatening, but that did not deter us from ordering our horses and cantering off to the spot where the troops

were to be reviewed, and a *feu de joie* fired: we went early to avoid the crush of the crowd. There, in spite of wind and weather, was collected all the beauty and fashion of Melbourne, dimly visible through the clouds of dust; there also was a vast assemblage of the unwashed, whose loyal vociferations and good-humoured faces it was quite a treat to hear and see.

We hastened home to smooth our ruffled feathers and recruit strength for the ball, which was a very grand affair, given at the Exhibition Buildings. The difficulty of getting there was so great in consequence of the number of persons attending it, that in despair we ordered our carriage to return home. It was, however, little use for us to fret and fume; we were in the *line* strictly enforced by the police, and forward we must go; we resigned ourselves therefore to our inevitable fate, and at last laughed at our annoyance. At length we were emancipated, and amid dazzling light were led up by an *aide-de-camp* to be presented to His Excellency. By the good-nature of one of the gentlemen in attendance we were allowed to stand at a short distance from the official group, and thereby we had a charming view, not only of the presentation, but of the people also, whom we could observe at our leisure as they passed on. A more motley assembly could not be imagined, nor, perhaps, now could such another be collected; for persons of all classes were there, from the *élite* in her faultless

Parisian costume, sent out on purpose for the birthday ball, and blazing with diamonds, to the gaunt and dowdy being, a compound of finery and bad taste, every part of whose dress seemed to have been borrowed from different friends, without any regard to colour or material, and whose bearing plainly indicated that this was her first appearance in public. From such we heard many a sigh of relief from pent-up emotion, and often the sickly smile of nervousness got up for His Excellency, had not left the countenance ere it came under our gaze. Dancing placed every one at his ease. The exhibitions in the ball-room were in keeping with the dresses. Detectives, like snakes, were gliding about noiselessly; their presence, however, was not needed, for the order was perfect, even during the supper, which was magnificent, and served in the gallery: the latter was profusely decorated with green boughs and flags, and brilliantly lighted with gas.

The delay of the mail from England again gave rise to an excitement among all classes, and caused a shadow to fall over all those connected with the money market. Various rumours were afloat, but the compressed lip and anxious eye revealed what the well-trained tongue refused to tell. One day when this anxiety was at its height, my husband returned from the city, tired, as I thought, and while at dinner I was endeavouring to amuse him by describing some laughable scenes I had

witnessed in the morning, when I perceived that his dinner was almost untasted, and that he looked haggard and care-worn; fearing to make any remark before the servants, I crushed down my rising fears, and oh! how long the time seemed until I could know the cause of this evident depression, for I saw now only too plainly legible on that dear face, some bad news which he dreaded to impart. At last we were alone, and his heart seemed lightened when he allowed me to share its burden. The bank in which our money was lodged had stopped payment, and we were, in all probability, ruined! Side by side in the dim twilight, we tried to strengthen each other and form plans for our future: this was a relief to the thoughts which would creep in — the little minor details which one by one wound more keenly than the one grand sorrow, for we nerve ourselves to bear *that*, but how difficult it is to support with quiet resignation the *tiny* stings of trial. Alas! when lights were brought, and my eyes rested on the elegant trifles which lay about the room, and which I knew must soon pass into other hands — stranger hands! — and would be no longer mine, I felt a pang of which the next moment I was ashamed. Two days passed of fearful anxiety; numberless failures were announced; the run on several of the banks was most severe; still they weathered the storm. The third morning my husband's joyful face told me that our

crisis was past,—*our* bank had resumed payment, and we were safe! With what thankful hearts did we again sit side by side, and bless the Giver of all for His goodness to us, and talk over with hushed voices the events of the last two terrible days. How true it is that we only learn the value of our everyday blessings when we are about to lose them.

A grand bazaar held at the Botanic Gardens for charitable purposes attracted all classes of persons; for notwithstanding the eager craving for amusement in this city, the people invariably bestow alms nobly and generously, freely responding to every appeal made to their benevolence. All that ingenuity or taste could suggest was put in requisition to render the decorations effective, and complete success was the result. The bands, whose excellent music formed one of the attractions, were sheltered from the sun, and in their cool bower played almost incessantly during the day. The stalls were handsomely got up and profusely covered with rich and tasteful wares. A great deal of fancy-work had been ordered from England, and was so novel and pretty that enormous prices were asked for it, and were freely given. Diggers, in the pride of new-found treasure, seemed bent on astonishing the fair ladies who presided at the stalls with the recklessness of their purchases, always choosing the most expensive and useless articles they could see. Yet these bachelor

spendthrifts dwindled into insignificance, as a man and his wife approached, the crowd making way for them; every eye following their movements, and scanning their extraordinary appearance: they both looked as if they knew they were creating a sensation and wished to be the centre of attraction, — this for the moment they certainly were. The man was dressed in the rude costume of a digger, making the contrast glaring between himself and his wife, who was leaning on his arm; her rich ruby-coloured velvet robe, fashionably made and profusely trimmed, swept the ground, although supported by a laughable breadth of crinoline — a white gauze shawl fastened by a large nugget brooch — a pink crêpe bonnet with green leaves — white satin shoes with large pink bows, and a blue parasol, completed the most absurd caricature of a digger's wife that could have been got up; and yet it was no false character, — they were truly what they seemed to be, and, rejoicing in their wealth, took their station at one of the stalls, and amazed the quiet little lady who was presiding there, with the magnificent way in which they lavished their money, selecting, in many instances, things with whose use they were totally unacquainted.

Tired at last, and almost deafened by the din and buzz of the crowd, we walked over the gardens noting the improvements which were constantly going on, and soon, as usual, we turned our steps to the aviary, to pay a

visit to our home songsters, the blackbird and the thrush, who, with the linnets, nightingales, and canaries, certainly thrive uncommonly well in their new home. Great praise is justly due, and is unanimously given, to Dr. Müller for the science and research which he has displayed in the formation of this establishment.

The day being fine, bright, and cool, we extended our ride towards Toorac, the Governor's residence, and on to the pretty little village of Malvern, from whence we had a magnificent view of the Dandenong ranges and the surrounding country, which was dotted here and there with gentlemen's houses and flourishing farms; retracing our steps for a mile, we turned to the right and took the road to Upper Hawthorne, crossing Gardener's Creek, over which there is a bridge, and a deep cutting through the hill leading to it. Being a bright summer's day the road was remarkably good, but in winter the crossing over the shabby wooden Hawthorne bridge is very disagreeable. I am happy to say that now there is a fine stone one in course of erection. We rode along the Richmond road, which is a very good one, and reached the suburb of Richmond, where there are several good houses with nice large gardens; though, for my part, I prefer South Yarra; Richmond being too dusty from the number of omnibuses and conveyances of all kinds, and carts bringing in wood from the country. We turned down by the Police Barrack,

which is very nicely kept: the houses are of zinc, and have little verandahs surrounding them, giving them a snug and comfortable appearance. Crossing the punt over the South Yarra, and ascending the very steep hill which I always hope they will some day cut down, we reached home, where we found a note inviting us to join a fishing party the next day to the Saltwater River.

Having collected all the requisites for a bushing party, we set out on a cool and pleasant morning, anticipating glorious sport from the cloudy sky. We had only just reached the fishing-ground, and were still exchanging greetings with the last comers, when big, heavy drops of rain began slowly to fall: the sanguine ones of the party declared it was only the tail of a thunder-shower, but the drops became less heavy and thicker, until a deluge poured down upon us from the dark clouds. Fortunately a fisherman's house was near, and in it we took refuge, a very small close room being given up to us. The usual exclamations of "Oh! how provoking!" "how vexatious!" were echoed by the whole party, and we certainly did not deserve the bright afternoon which succeeded the wet morning. The spot was flat and uninteresting, but we were now too eager for our delayed amusement to notice anything. We caught quantities of a little delicate fish — a kind of bream — which was a great treat to us, as fish is both scarce and very dear in Melbourne, which always surprised me, as quantities of very fine fish are to be caught in Hobson's Bay;

schnapper, butter-fish, flat heads, cray-fish, and large shrimps may at times be purchased, but it does not appear that any people have as yet taken upon themselves the trade of fishermen, which would, I am sure, be most remunerative. It is the same with respect to game: flocks of birds are to be seen rising from the *scrub*, and wild ducks are there in quantities, yet they are expensive to buy and often very difficult to be had.

If the pleasure-loving citizens of Melbourne have their fancies pampered, the graver part of the population are establishing more intellectual amusements for themselves, and these scientific societies advance with tropical growth. The one of all others I am particularly interested in is that for the prosecution of microscopic investigation, the small microscope I had brought out with me having been a never-ceasing source of enjoyment; for not only is the mind expanded by the contemplation of the hidden marvels of creation, revealed to us by means of this useful instrument, but the heart is lifted up to adore the wonderful wisdom of the glorious Creator: then a spirit of research too is engendered, and instinctively no object, however insignificant it may appear to the ordinary observer, is passed over, as it is sure to contain hidden in its unsightliness some novel and curious formation. Early should the eye be trained to observation, for it is a priceless gift in after life to

have the perceptions so quickened that every passing beauty may be thoroughly enjoyed, from the grandest display of nature in mountain and forest to the simple tiny flower growing on the hill-side; even in the fleeting cloud or the ray of sunlight the practised eye can call up at a glance exquisite enjoyment, the senses fully appreciating the harmony of tints and passing shadows.

I was not present at the opening of the Mechanics' Institution at Emerald Hill, but I heard that it was a grand affair; His Excellency the Governor presided, and took such an interest in it that the members were very much gratified. We constantly attended the lectures delivered there, and were generally much pleased, particularly with a course on China and the Chinese, which was especially well timed, as all eyes were then turned to that singular people, and the opening at last of a country hitherto so pertinaciously closed against all the world. However, now we have a chance of peeping into the raree show; but from the specimens of the natives that we saw in Australia, I have my doubts as to its being all that fancy has so glowingly painted it. The Cremorne Gardens followed up the lectures by a grand display of fireworks representing the bombardment of Canton: this we looked at from our verandah, and a very pretty sight it was, the coruscations lending to our flower-garden the semblance of the shifting scenes of a theatre.

Just at this time, also, the Exhibition Building was thrown open for the display of the pictures collected by the Fine Arts Association. A very large number were exhibited, concerning which it would be invidious to remark further than that many that were there ought to have been rejected; yet in a new country, and in a first attempt to call forth native talent, it must be difficult as well as painful to check the rising aspirations of young artists and damp their ardour, and those who had the direction of this exhibition doubtless had this in view. The novice, as he gazes alternately at his crude attempt, and the finished drawing hanging at its side, will derive, we may hope, more benefit from the comparison than if his self-love had been wounded by rejection. There were many successful pictures which would have been ornaments anywhere; one quite fascinated me, it was such a clever delineation of Australian scenery; the peculiar touch of the foliage was portrayed with wonderful accuracy, and all the minor details of the painting were so happily carried out. Some miniatures were exquisite, and the models in plaster very good; but the photographs far exceeded any I had seen before; many were portraits of public characters.

It was on a bright breezy morning that we ordered our horses and rode to see the Governor present standards to the yeomanry, a very fine body of men, beautifully

mounted. The horses of this country always stand fire well, from being early accustomed to the stock whip, which makes a noise like the sharp report of a pistol. The uniform of the men is very handsome, but the officers are got up regardless of expense, the dark blue coat being covered with rich and heavy gold embroidery; a helmet and a white plume complete the splendid uniform. One officer especially attracted universal attention, and, I must add, admiration; he was mounted on a grey Arab, perfect in all its points; full of fire and spirit, it bounded, pranced, curveted, and seemed so impatient of control, yet so perfectly trained as to obey the slightest word or movement of its graceful rider. In a short time every available spot of ground which could command a view was occupied; all Melbourne seemed with one consent to have congregated in honour of the occasion; gaily dressed ladies were not wanting to enliven the scene. After a little delay the Governor's carriage, containing Miss Barkly and the private secretary, drove up, the servants in blue state livery, silk stockings, and bouquets. Then the Governor, accompanied by the General, and followed by a brilliant staff of officers, rode in and was received with the usual honours, the handsome *aide-de-camp* receiving more than his share of bright glances from the fair young dames!

CHAP. X.

AN INVITATION TO A SQUATTER PRINCE.—THE VISIT.—FERN GULLY.
—A BUSHING PARTY.—THE OLD SETTLER'S STORY.—MOUNT
JULIET.—OUT DOOR AMUSEMENTS.—FISHING.

As soon as the review was over we rodé away quickly, for we had an invitation to the *déjeuner* given on the opening of the Richmond railway. To our great disgust we arrived there too late; the place was so full that it was quite impossible for us to get in; so nothing remained for us but to turn our horses' heads towards home, which on consideration was a much wiser proceeding than undergoing the fatigue of a long public entertainment.

Any little disappointment I might have felt was quickly dispelled by the perusal of a note of invitation from a gentleman settler, who lives *en prince*, to join a party who were to spend a week at his house; the Fern Gully and Mount Juliet were the baits held out to us, as if we wanted any! To be once more enjoying the delights of a settler's country life was to me a pleasure with which nothing the city contained could compete,

and, child-like, I could neither sleep nor eat until my dreams were realised and I found myself *en route* in a drag behind four thorough-bred horses. Our cavalcade consisted of four carriages, besides riding horses. The roads were rough and heavy, but the country so lovely that we were fully compensated for the severe jolting we had at times to endure. We had only a short rest at a public house during the day; the horses thus refreshed, completed the remainder of the journey much sooner than we expected, so that we had ample time, on our arrival, to dress for dinner.

The house was quite new, and was a very handsome-looking edifice, which particularly struck us, situated as it was so far away in the bush. The rooms were large and lofty, and the numerous party assembled round the dinner-table did not in the least crowd it. We were thirty guests besides the large family of our host. I have seldom seen a better-dressed dinner anywhere; there was no attempt at show, but everything was there which the most practised epicure could desire. A German band played during dessert. This band had been sent up from Melbourne to enliven our visit, and to its inspiring strains we danced until a late hour in the evening. There is something in the air of Australia which invigorates the system so powerfully that fatigue is rarely complained of.

In the morning we were awakened by a neat hand-

maiden presenting us with tea and most delicious bread and butter, which was particularly grateful as we had to wait for a late breakfast. The baths in the ladies' dressing-rooms were so cool and the water so fresh, — very unlike what we were in the habit of using in the city. The gentlemen had a bath-room to themselves; in fact we all enjoyed every comfort which we could desire, which astonished me when I looked round on the numerous guests. After breakfast we amused ourselves with singing, archery, sketching and talking, until luncheon assembled us all, and then we rode, finishing the evening always with dancing.

We started one morning early for the Fern Gully. We had to ford a river — the Upper Yarra; but as it was at that time too deep to think of crossing otherwise than in a boat, one was sent down from the station, in which we passed over with the saddles, whilst the horses swam across with a rope attached to them. We were so large a party that it took us some time to accomplish this (*to me*) venturesome undertaking, for some of the horses got loose and were not easily captured again, as they did not seem to relish their cold baths; then the saddling and starting the whole party again took up far more time than we had calculated upon. Before reaching the foot of Mount Juliet, at the side of which is the Fern-tree Gully, we had to cross a swamp or morass which was as dangerous as it was disagreeable. Our guide evi-

dently did not know the ground ; for while leading on the party he got himself into a deep part and was thrown. So wet and muddy was the poor man on his reappearance, that we had in mercy to send him home. The other horses, after plunging in the mud and being extremely restive, were at last compelled to take their riders over to *terra firma*, with no further mischance than being well bespattered with mud. Having been delayed in the swamp, we were now obliged to ride hard so as to have plenty of time to ascend the mountain. At last we entered the gully ; and really I could not attempt to describe the beauty that burst upon us, the effect of its loveliness was so heightened by contrast ; for before entering the gully we had been riding through regular Australian *bush*, surrounded by burnt up and scraggy gum trees ; all at once these disappeared, and we saw rising up before us, straight and clean as the mast of a ship, to the height of from two hundred and fifty to three hundred feet without a branch, the most magnificent gum trees, as different from their scraggy cousins in the bush as are the forests of the New World from those of the Old. Protected by these powerful neighbours, the spreading graceful fern trees, together with the sassafras and musk trees, luxuriate. The stillness of this spot was perfectly sublime ; not even a bird was to be heard ; only the rushing and rippling of the little pebbly brooks as they descended from the mountain.

These streams are full of leeches; I had heard so before we went, but forgot all about them until, whilst dipping our heads and washing our hands in the cool water, we were painfully reminded of the fact, for they stuck to our faces and hands with such pertinacity that streams of blood flowed from the bites as we plucked them off each other. I really think some of them must have fallen on us from the trees, as we used to find them on us while riding. One had slyly ensconced itself in my hair, and was only discovered by the red stream which came trickling down my face. This little *contretemps* did not, however, prevent our having a lively sense of the loveliness of this far-famed spot, and we lingered long examining the varieties of ferns that grew in wondrous luxuriance under the shadow of their taller brethren, whose feather-like fronds drooped so gracefully over them. We returned by an avenue the sappers had cut, and rode to their tents, where we intended to leave our horses while we ascended the mountain. We had our luncheon, and thus strengthened, began our ascent. The path had been cut with great labour, and we were the first ladies who had ventured up its acclivity, which was so steep and toilsome that we half-repented of our undertaking, but the changing views, which almost every step developed, cheered us on. Our guide, one of the sappers who had been employed in cutting the path, assured us they had met with a species

of *boa constrictor*, which I fancy must be the *Hoplocephalus superbis*, as they always describe it as of a handsome brown colour, with the centre of the body yellow. Lyre pheasants he also spoke of as inhabiting in numbers the most inaccessible parts of the mountain. In short, he had so many stories to tell of the wonderful things he had seen, that the gentlemen were very anxious to have a day's shooting on the mountain; and as we found we could not reach its summit and return home the same night, we agreed to *bush it*, which would allow the sportsmen time to explore the hidden recesses, and ourselves to start fresh for our formidable undertaking. We then leisurely retraced our steps, stopping to inspect the new mosses, ferns, and flowers we had not seen before, and lingering where a vista of glorious mountain scenery was set like a picture in a frame of green boughs. A few steps further on, and we were again buried in the dark interminable forest of sombre green. On reaching the tents of the sappers, we found very bustling preparations in progress; the party who preceded us had already kindled a fire, a kettle was swinging over it, the horses were hobbled and were feeding at some distance, and *mi-mis* were in course of erection for the gentlemen, who had secured one of the sappers' tents for the ladies, and into it were heaped such piles of soft moss and fern as ensured us beds like down. I had always longed to make one of the far-famed Australian bushing parties, and

most thoroughly did I enjoy the accomplishment of my wish. When all the preparations for the night had been completed, we were called to our supper, which consisted of the remains of our luncheon, with a savoury stew made of game, and some tea; and afterwards we sat round the fire singing glees and telling stories. Some very strange ones were related that night, mostly all of Australian adventures; and no fiction, however overdrawn, could come up to these extraordinary facts. One only will I narrate, and that as nearly as possible in the same words as I heard it; for it made at the time rather a strong impression on me, sitting as I was in the gloom of a forest, with the flickering light of our fire now revealing now hiding the white stems of the gum trees, which even in the daytime look like evil spirits, twisted as they are into strange and uncouth shapes, but at night really like demons only waiting a command to throw themselves in our midst!

THE OLD SETTLER'S STORY.

You all ask me for a story—I know what you are driving at; I don't like to tell the one you want, it makes my blood curdle to think of it, even now; however, I suppose I must,—so here goes. One comfort is

that it is so long ago that none of you will know the parties; some are laid in their cold graves over the water, and others, I trust, are enjoying a happy old age. To the real names or places I shall never give you a clue; so if you were to try ever so hard to puzzle out the actors in my story, you would not succeed, I can promise you.

Well! in one of the first settlements, one of the grand officials came out with a pearl of a wife; she was very young and so lovely, that she always went by the name of "the English Rose." She was small, very fair, and her manner was so winning, and her heart so kind, that many a convict was saved from punishment by her interference; no appeal was made to her in vain. She was fond of sketching, and of collecting the many new flowers and shrubs which were then unknown in England, and many a bush party was made for her, to spend the day in the woods. One day we went out on one of these excursions, got up this time to dispel from her mind a very disagreeable affair which was passing in the colony just then; — one of a gang of bushrangers had been captured, such a determined villain, that it was resolved to make an example of the fellow: his wife, whom he had abandoned for years, had turned up, and finding the "English Rose" alone, had knelt at her feet, and, with tears of despair, begged her to save her husband's life. This time the Rose's husband turned a

deaf ear to his petted wife's entreaties, and the day of execution was fixed.

• As usual our bushing party had been successful, the servants had been sent home laden with our day's discoveries, and we were following them. Our horses were fresh and we were descanting on their various merits, some of the ladies were for a race, which I put a stop to. Poor things! they little guessed how soon they would have to ride for their lives perhaps. We came to a thick wood, when suddenly a party of villainous-looking bushrangers fell upon us; we had no time for thought; the "English Rose," who was an accomplished horsewoman, never lost her presence of mind, but, dashing forward, was soon far ahead, her flying figure on the grey Arab growing less and less in the distance. Her flight was suddenly perceived; she was evidently the quarry sought, for while the remainder of the party were made to dismount and were tied to trees, three of the rascals pursued the fugitive, and in the *mêlée* I escaped and followed them, hoping to aid her in her terrible situation. The frightful race lasted longer than could be believed, but in the end we gained ground, and when the wretches noticed it, they gave vent to their feelings in expressions of admiration at the courage and horsemanship of the fragile being they were riding down. At last we were so close that we could hear her encouraging her noble steed with her

voice; but a moment after he stumbled and fell, throwing his mistress to the ground, where she lay stunned. No cry nor shout of joy proclaimed the triumph of her pursuers; the men dismounted, and at the bidding of one who seemed their chief, hastily collected leaves and fern, and gently laid the senseless form upon the rustic couch. Her long golden hair fell in rich masses of curls from her riding hat, which, with its broken feather, hung on her neck, exposing an almost childlike face of striking beauty, although the paleness of death was on it, and the eyes were closed. Water from their flasks was poured on her face, and gently were her gloves taken off by the chief who was kneeling at her side, when suddenly a cry as of sharp pain burst from him as he held the tiny hand in his, his eye resting on an old-fashioned ring on her finger, one she had often told us was an heirloom in her husband's family — two ruby hearts, pierced with a diamond arrow. At length he respectfully raised her hand to his lips; at that moment she opened her eyes and murmured, "Oh! Lionel, I have been so frightened," and nestled in his bosom, making an effort to put her arm round his neck as he was lowly bending over her; a spasm, a gasp for breath, and a shudder passed over the strong man, and big tears, like the first drops of a thunderstorm, fell from his eyes. "*My sister! My sister!*" was all he said, and then for the first time I understood his likeness to her husband,

which had puzzled me while the scene was acting. Turning to me, he said, "Sir, thank God you are here; take charge of her before she discovers her mistake; your party shall be liberated, and this poor child conveyed home." He rose from his knees, for he was still bending over his intended victim, who had relapsed into insensibility, and I seated myself beside her, and tried to restore her to consciousness. The men now busily employed themselves in forming a rude litter of boughs, and when completed she was lifted on to it, and gently borne forward. I mounted my horse and was joined by the chief; for a moment we were both silent, then as I was about to speak he stopped me, saying in the concentrated voice of strong emotion, "I owe you an explanation for this, as the only reparation I can make. Her husband is my younger brother; she was an orphan cousin, brought up in our house, of which that fair child was ever the sunbeam, and to me she looked up as an elder brother with love and reverence. It is many years since I saw her, and I would not that she recognised me now: my mother's ring, my brother's name, revealed her to me. I was wild and extravagant, and was obliged to fly the country, having madly gone security for a large sum for one of my reckless companions; my father refused to meet the bills, and I swore I would never see his face again. The downward course is rapid, but the events of the last half-hour have made

it impossible for me to continue any longer what I am. I shall start for Europe, and there endeavour to redeem the past. The reason for this attack on you may easily be guessed: *her* life in our keeping, our companion's life was safe, we should have threatened life for life. Now tell all to my brother, his taking his wife's name explains my not knowing him. Ask him, from me, to let me leave my wretched companions with something like honour, that with a less heavy heart I may leave this land — let the convict escape — can I depend on you?" I grasped his hand and promised, and so we parted.

Sir Lionel —, anxious at our non-arrival, had ridden out to meet us, and had encountered the terrified party. His distress may be imagined, on finding that they could give him no tidings of his wife: when I returned therefore with her, and related her escape, his thankfulness was so great, that he promised everything. I contrived the convict's escape, and also the meeting of the brothers before the sea parted them again. The gang too were persuaded to shift their quarters, but in this last affair I had no little trouble; fortunately, they never suspected the relationship between their chief and ours.

I'll be bound this cured us all of bushing parties. We never again mentioned such a pastime. My "*Rose*" is a grandmother now, and the terrible Uncle Richard,

I hear, tells such tales of horror to his grand-nephews, as sends them scared to their beds. He himself has been as good as his word, and has become a very respectable member of society. And now go to bed all of you, and thank your stars that you are none of you Governors' wives, with a convict placed in the opposite scale.

Had we not been more fatigued by our day's work (or rather pleasure) than tired of the story, we should never have enjoyed our soft couches as we did, and I felt quite inclined to be lazy next morning. When our little camp was astir, buckets of cool water were placed at the door of our tent for our use, and we soon hurried out, a cheerful merry party.

Our breakfast despatched, we set off fresh for our toilsome walk. With great difficulty we reached the summit of Mount Juliet, the path was so frightfully steep. The sappers had cleared a large spot on the very top of the mountain, leaving one tall tree standing alone in its gigantic beauty, which can be seen at a very long distance. The trees which are found on this spot are very peculiar, having a small leaf like an evergreen oak, and they give more shade than the gum trees. Sitting under the shelter of the wide-spreading branches of the monarch of the mountain, we gazed spell-bound

at the panorama which was spread before us; for although the elevation was great and the air clear, we could scarcely believe that our eyes were not deceiving us, when we clearly discerned Melbourne, Hobson's Bay, and the pier at William's Town, at a distance of nearly one hundred miles! In the direction of Castlemaine, Mount Alexander and Mount Macedon reared their peaks into the clouds, and towards Gipps' Land the ranges seemed clothed with forests, whose various tints made us certain that trees of a different foliage were mingled with the everlasting sombre-coloured gum tree. Here we could have staid for hours gazing on a prospect such as seldom falls to the lot of mortals to behold; but we had a long ride before us, and our friends the sportsmen had to be collected; so with lingering eyes we set our faces towards the descent. If we had been gratified, the sportsmen had not been less successful; they had shot very many lyre pheasants and other beautifully plumaged birds, particularly a mocking-bird which we had remarked at daylight; its tones were the most faithful of all mocking-birds, it imitated every sound or bird it heard to the life. It is generally at early dawn that this bird begins its mocking tones; it scrapes together a mound of earth and stones, which it ascends before singing. It is a very shy bird, and difficult to get at; even our bird-loving friend confessed it was not worth the trouble of following.

We had some roasted for dinner, which we found very dry and tasteless.

• We could not, however, linger over the game bags, as we were already late; so mounting our horses, which were very fresh, we started off at a gallop over a corduroy road, formed of fern trees laid side by side, which would have puzzled any but an Australian horse to get over so rapidly and so safely. This time we met with no mischance from morass or river, and safely arrived at our hospitable host's as the darkness set in. We were all too much impressed with the beauty of the fairyland in which we had passed most of the last thirty-six hours to speak of anything else for the evening, and as usual each pair of eyes had formed its own idea of that beauty.

Of all the out-door amusements we enjoyed — and they were numerous — kangaroo hunting comes first on my list; it combined so much the exhilarating gallop on a good horse, and lovely scenery to admire when slowly riding, and so many new and interesting objects to attract the attention, with the wild excitement of following the graceful animals as they started off with such tremendous leaps as must be witnessed to be believed. It was on our return from one of these hunts that the kangaroo-dog, who had attached himself to me and was my especial pet, gave chase to a *Paddy melon* or kangaroo-rat, an animal nearly as large as a rabbit. After

a chase of a quarter of an hour it was run down and we brought it home: it was such a pretty creature, quite a kangaroo in miniature, with the same graceful head and the power of taking wild flying leaps. It was sent into the kitchen and served in the form of a curry. The meat was very white, like chicken, and quite as tender. At the time I did not know it by its disgusting appellation of *rat*, and did not feel quite comfortable after having partaken of *rat curry*. There is a smaller animal of the same kind, which is called a kangaroo-mouse. Why these animals have been given the same name as our house pests I cannot guess, for they do not seem to bear any affinity to one another.

Riding home by the bank of the river, we came upon a large black snake, the *Pseudechis porphyriacus*, which is very common here and is extremely venomous; it was basking in the sun, and must have measured at least seven feet; unfortunately we were not able to kill it, not having whips or any kind of sticks, as the Australian horses do not require any spur to quicken their paces: immediately on perceiving us it reared its head as if for a spring, but on our retreating it glided into its hole to our very great satisfaction.

Our fishing here was very novel, but I cannot say it was as agreeable as in the old-fashioned way, for we went out at night, when it was very dark, and had fires lighted on the bank of the river, which attracted the

fish, so that we caught large quantities of eels and black fish. It was always cool and refreshing after the hot day, and would have been more enjoyable had we not been tormented by swarms of mosquitoes; we had, however, a good deal of merriment in poking about by the light of the flickering fire for *pennyroyal*, which grew about there in great luxuriance, and is a never-failing cure for these irritating punctures.

Alas! the morning came at last when our adieus had to be spoken; and very sorrowfully I left our kind friends, whose many endearing qualities had so soon transformed them from mere acquaintances into friends in every sense of the word.

CHAP. XI.

OPENING OF THE CASTLEMAINE RAILWAY. — FÊTE AT TOORAC. — A VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND. — ARRIVAL AT DUNEDIN. — A STATION AT DUNEDIN. — LAND SALES. — A PIG HUNT. — DISTURBANCES AT NEW PLYMOUTH. — THE CASUS BELLI. — RETURN TO MELBOURNE. — DÉPARTURE FOR ENGLAND.

MELBOURNE, in all its dust, heat, and ceremony, was not welcome, and I often sighed for the happy country life of an Australian settler. Our dissipation soon recommenced. We found an invitation awaiting us to be present at the opening of the Castlemaine railway, which was expected to be an affair of ten hours. I did not attend it, but my husband did. The *déjeûner* was given at Sunbury, between twenty and thirty miles from Melbourne. The Governor, who was accompanied by the General and a brilliant staff, was received with due honours by the yeomanry. The arrangements were said to be excellent; the utmost order prevailed; the names of the guests were placed on the plates, so that there was not the least confusion to mar the enjoyments of a *déjeûner* on which taste and expense had been lavished. The next evening the rail-

way company gave a ball at the Exhibition Buildings, which was numerously attended. As I listened to the account of all these gay doings I could not help thinking how wonderfully changed and changing still was the colony of Victoria, since we landed six years before : from a young settlement with streets knee-deep in mud, often inundated by floods drowning children in their wild course, the capital has risen up, a stately city, stretching out widely her arms on either side, and lavishing her gold on everything that will beautify and adorn her, and give her a place among the cities of the Old World.

The fêtes at Toorac were on a princely scale, and were most enjoyable. I must try to describe one of them. The party assembled at three o'clock, and nothing could have had a better effect than the scene as we approached : the lawn was dotted over with small bell tents, striped with different colours and surmounted with gay-coloured flags dancing in the breeze, whilst bright young figures were flitting about like fairies. Truly it was fairyland, nor did the effect lessen when we mixed with the gay groups. Archery seemed to be the great pleasure of the day, and in a tent decorated with red, white, and blue the prizes for the clever winners were laid out : these prizes were of great beauty and costliness, and were well worthy of a severe competition. In the other tents ices and various kinds of light refreshments

were served. Those whose tastes did not lead them to the archery butts strolled about the grounds, and I was of that number, for, woman-like, I was lost in admiration of the wonderful dresses here exhibited. Never had the noon-day sun shone on such a gorgeous display of rich brocades, silks, satins, and India muslins! My companion was a man who condescended to notice these trifles, and who prided himself on being able to tell to a nicety (so he thought at least) how a lady ought to be dressed; in short, he was a man who would have been invaluable in a millinery establishment, but under whose scrutinising eye you could not always feel comfortable. We heard it whispered that the bonnet worn by one of the ladies present had cost thirty pounds! what could it be made of? On we rambled peering into every face until the identical lady was exposed to our view: we went up to shake hands — hypocrites that we were! I think I see the face of my escort as we drew near, the lip turned up expressive of contempt at what he thought must be some outrageous display of gaudy finery, and then the gradual toning down of the expressive feature into surprise and admiration when he saw only a very quiet, pretty bonnet of white lace and oriental pearls!

The *déjeuner* was served in a large oblong tent, and differed in no respect from those of the same kind in fashionable London. When the shades of evening began to fall, the party adjourned to the house, where dancing

was kept up with great spirit until ten o'clock, when the carriages were announced.

On the arrival of the long-delayed mail my husband received letters which peremptorily required his return to England. So unexpected were these tidings that I scarcely knew what my feelings on the subject were when we sat down to talk over our affairs: the gush of joy, at the thought of being once more at home with those we so loved, was damped when we remembered the friends we were leaving, many of whom we could not hope to see again, nor the pleasant country of their adoption. I thought, if we could but have attracted our dear ones out to us, we should not have much cared to see the Old World again! A few days previously, we had received a pressing invitation from an old friend to visit her in New Zealand, and now we determined to accept her invitation before we sailed for England, as we were both anxious to test the truth of the wonderful stories we had heard on all sides of the success of the settlers there, and of the beauty and luxuriant vegetation of that particular locality where our friends had recently purchased a large station, situated, they told us, two miles from Dunedin, in the province of Otago in the Middle Island. We were only too glad now to have this opportunity of seeing New Zealand before leaving

this side of the world, and accordingly lost no time in taking our passage on board the steamer *Pirate*.

It was February, the finest and driest of the months, corresponding with our English August, so we hoped we were sure of fine weather for our voyage; and we *had* beautiful weather as far as the *Heads*; but when we had passed them and entered *the Rip* or bar, the steamer began to roll and pitch so much that all the ladies had to go below, and to me it was an enigma how the gentlemen could eat their dinners! — but eat they did, and appeared thoroughly to enjoy themselves, if one might judge from the roars of laughter and the clattering of plates and knives in the saloon; sounds only too audible, and not very soothing to those who were enduring that worst of all plagues — sea-sickness, for which, moreover, no one ever gets any pity. Happily the cry of “*a large steamer in sight*” dispersed the noisy party: it proved to be the mail from England, with the overland letters for Melbourne, which did not put me in very good humour when I reflected how long it might be before I could read them. We had a very fine passage of ten days, although I believe it is often made in less time. It was late at night when we landed at Dunedin: our friends were there ready to receive us, so we drove off quickly to their station. It was so dark that our curiosity could not be gratified with even a glimpse of the country through which we were passing; we learned something,

however, of the nature of the roads—at least the one we were traversing so rapidly must have been an extremely good one, for we were not once jolted, which agreeably surprised us.

On waking in the morning we were sensibly reminded of England: the air was cool, moist, and balmy, very unlike the dry heat of Australia; and the breakfast-table helped still further to carry on the pleasing illusion—*Devonshire* cream, honey, delicious bread and butter, with a profusion of English fruits, were most invitingly spread out, and were so grateful after a sea-voyage. The house was a very large one and two-storied (again so unlike those of Australia); it was situated on a rising ground commanding a splendid view, in one direction of the whole of Dunedin and the ocean beyond; and in the other of a lofty range of mountains, partially covered with forests, which we were told are perpetually green, and whose freshness and richness of colour impart a great charm to the landscape. The grounds covered a hundred acres of land, most of which was laid down in English grass, which they told me grew without the slightest trouble; the land is first simply cleared from the fern by setting it judiciously on fire, then the seed is thrown upon the ground and grows up wonderfully well. There were still very many acres covered with thick bush, in which we found ferns as fine, if not finer, than any I saw near

Mount Juliet: but the trees and shrubs were almost all unknown to me; their variety seemed endless; this was proclaimed at a glance, by the innumerable shades of green as they blended in harmonious loveliness; tall trees with mast-like trunks—so smooth and straight were they—raised their stately heads crowned with spreading branches, from which creepers and parasites drooped, interlacing each other and forming thick festoons of every shade of green.

There was a gully close to the house, which was a perfect mass of ferns of all kinds, from a little plant of an inch high, to the large fern tree of twenty feet. It was impossible to fancy anything more lovely. The garden, which was well stocked with all kinds of English fruits and flowers, opened into this sweet spot and added to its charms. Walks wound through the valley to the bottom, where flowed a pretty stream clear as crystal; but, alas! there were no beautiful speckled trout darting about, the only things wanting to make it perfection; but on my expressing to Mr. W—— my surprise that such a stream should not contain fish, he said he had sent to England for some, and was expecting them shortly; also pheasants, woodcocks, and partridges; for he wished to make his home as like England as possible, and there was no reason why New Zealand should not abound with all kinds of game, for, strange to say, there does not exist a single animal

indigenous to this country which would be hostile to their increase; food and cover, even for deer, are there in perfection, and the climate is one in which they would luxuriate. Water-cresses, we perceived, were abundant in the streams, pleasing memorials of a philanthropic lady, who, a few years before, had conferred that benefit on the colony, by sowing the seed from which they sprung wherever she found a stream or river, and we were told that this little breakfast plant has so spread, that now almost all the running water is covered with it.

We just went to our friends in the middle of their busy harvest month, and it was a great pleasure to give them a helping hand, and to assist Mrs. W—— and her daughters in gathering the fruit from the garden to be stored up for the winter. It was a long time since my eyes had feasted on such a variety of choice wall-fruits as was contained in the teeming baskets; and merrily our work was done, for not a wasp, hornet, nor even earwig, was there to scare a coward like me from the downy peach or rosy apple. It is to be hoped that no settler, in his zeal to make his home as nearly like his English one as possible, will introduce into New Zealand these little pests, which are fortunately not indigenous there; slugs and snails are quite remembrances enough, and they, with the butterflies, are just like our own. Strange to say, though the climate and soil are

so genial to our English fruits, this country does not possess even one wild berry of its own worth plucking.

One day we drove into Dunedin, which is certainly situated in a most lovely spot: the scenery very much resembles that of the Lakes of Killarney, only that the various rich tints of fresh bright green give it a more glowing loveliness. Lofty mountains covered with timber to their very summits rise on one side, and on the other there is an estuary and a beautifully wooded peninsula, with the sea beyond; indeed I wonder that so little has been said of its beauty, for I cannot fancy any place more entitled to praise on that account. From all I saw I was more than half tempted to urge my husband to purchase a station in this little paradise; but home ties were too strong, and the wish to see England again, after so many years' absence, was so great, that this idle fancy became as a passing thought. The houses at Dunedin are very good, and have gardens, well stocked with fruit trees, besides a few acres of land attached, which at the time these houses were built was to be had cheap. One very grand house I noticed as untenanted; it was built, I was told, by an old East Indian, who also laid out the grounds with much taste. It is too grand a place for a young colonist to inhabit, but for one whose fortune was made, there could not be a more desirable residence; it might be made into quite a fairy palace.

The rosy children we met at every turn, gave an undeniable proof of the salubrity of the climate. In the summer a cool refreshing sea-breeze sets in in the morning, and tempers the heat, which is never greater than in England; while in winter sometimes a little sprinkling of snow is seen; the atmosphere is free from fog, but the dews are heavy, and when rain falls it is quite tropical in its intensity, as are also the heavy gales of wind which are severely felt on the coast.

Our friends, it seemed, had just gone to New Zealand in time to purchase the station, which turned out such an exceedingly good one, for soon afterwards everything went up so much in value that when we were there (in 1860) it required a large capital to start a station with any prospect of success. Land — I mean crown land — had been raised from ten shillings to a pound an acre; this, it is to be hoped, will in a great measure stop speculation, for until this was done, such thousands of acres were being purchased that run-holders were becoming very anxious about the fate of their runs; however, the land sales have not been nearly so great since. Cultivated land within four miles of the town is selling now at an enormous price, from ten to fifty pounds an acre, and it still seems to be rising. The town itself, as might be expected in such a young colony, is small and not particularly well laid out, but there are very good roads round it, which are partially macadamised.

I was very anxious to go up to a station with Mr. W——, and the other gentlemen, two hundred miles off, as I wanted to see a *pig hunt*; but I was unwillingly persuaded to abandon the idea, as they assured me no lady could stand the fatigue and discomfort of such a journey; so I had to content myself with my husband's account of it on his return, and be thankful that I had had such wise counsellors. Alas! how prone we are to look with indifference on the experience of others and fancy in our conceit how much better we should manage — what an amount of suffering we should avoid if we were more humble — how true is the trite saying, that nothing is so cheap as advice, nothing so dear as experience! The powers of endurance of the gentlemen were put to the proof during their long ride. The way lay through forests dense with underwood, shrubs, and fern, which were so matted and entwined with gigantic creepers that it was almost an impossibility to get through the path which had been cut, the young shoots had pushed out so quickly as to bar the way. Rivers too had to be forded and wide plains crossed. Much of the scenery was remarkable for grandeur and majesty — lofty mountains clothed in green and crowned with glistening snow, and further adorned in some instances with foaming torrents rushing down their sides, rose from forests of gigantic timber; yet they frequently passed sheltered spots of quiet loveliness such as one might

select for the site of a homestead. As they neared the station, which was on the other side of the island, the scenery assumed a different aspect; trees became scarce and in parts were absent altogether, but the underwood and scrub were very thick. The station gained at last, some days were spent in recruiting their strength before the grand *pig hunt* came off. There were thousands of pigs on the station, and as these animals are very destructive to sheep, every precaution was taken to ensure the success of the hunt, and great sport was expected. The pigs were hunted with large dogs, and were shot, speared, or ridden down, without mercy; some of the large old boars showing much ferocity and courage, so that many hairbreadth escapes from their tusks were related by our party, when they returned quite vain of their prowess in these encounters. The meat of the fat young pigs, they said, was as delicate as turkey, and the labourers prefer it to mutton; so they make the hunting a very profitable amusement.

During my husband's absence it was a great comfort to me to be certain that there were no native tribes prowling about, eager to taste the "flesh of an Englishman." I do not think anything would tempt me to live in the Northern Island, where, if a native looked at me, I should feel it was with the same eyes with which a butcher contemplates a young fatted calf, or tender lamb! As I write, the face of the black military

labourer in Grenada, who was my father's grass-cutter, rises distinctly to my recollection. I was a child then, and as I pitied the old man, I used to talk and laugh with him when he brought me new flowers, or tender grass to feed my pony; but when I heard how, long ago, there was a sick white baby, taken out daily by its English nurse for air; whom he had tenderly watched and about whose health he made constant inquiries until the poor little thing died and was consigned to its narrow grave; and then when night came on, how he stole to the spot, dug up the little body, and was discovered in the act of devouring it! oh! what horror, froze my childish heart. I could not be induced to remain in his sight for a moment from that hour; and hence my peculiar horror of a cannibal was one of those early lessons implanted in childhood which are never forgotten.

The *Maori*, who are scattered over the Middle Island, are very few in number and do not horde together in tribes: the men are a tall handsome race, the women small and very pretty. I was told that they are quite offended if any allusion is made to the cannibalism of their ancestors; and well they may, for the stories we heard on the subject were so horrible and revolting that I could not venture to transcribe them.

Rumours of the disturbances at New Plymouth had just reached us, but were vague and unconfirmed till we met a gentleman who had just arrived, having disposed

of his farm, which was somewhere near Taranaki, owing to the unsettled state of the colony, which he foresaw would eventually come to something serious; he therefore removed his farming and household goods, and determined to purchase land in Otago, which he thought would pay better than the land of New Plymouth; and having considerable knowledge of squatting life, he felt sure of getting on: he brought down with him some good horses and sheep. He told us he had long hesitated before taking this important step, but when he found that Wiremu Kingi was bent on war, and had conveyed his wife and children into the depths of the forest, he thought it time for him to seek another home for his own wife and family, who were living in a continual state of terror, and not they alone, for dismay and consternation, he said, sat on every settler's face in their locality. We had long conversations about Taranaki and the natives, and from him I gained a short and lucid account of the cause of this present war, which may perhaps be acceptable to those of my lady readers who do not wade through the newspapers and yet like to be *au fait* as to passing events.

It is well known in the North Island that the natives of New Zealand have always systematically resisted the encroachments of the white man on their territory, viewing with a jealous eye every attempt made to wrench from their grasp the land of their forefathers.

They feel that their race is rapidly decreasing: this is plainly shown by the vast desert tracts which were once occupied by tribes whose very names are now passing away. It is not then surprising that a warlike people should seize, if it was only for self-preservation, on every available point of dispute; and although it is certain that these contests must eventually end in the destruction of their race, still, as long as any of them remain, there must be a constant occurrence of strife and division between themselves and the white man. The present *casus belli* is in itself trivial, and appears to have been simply an excuse for carrying out those plans, from which they have never swerved; namely, for preserving their lands for themselves.

A native chief, Teira, offered to sell some valuable land situated at Waitara to the British Government. The native tribes did not exhibit any hostility to the transfer, and all agreed that Teira was the true owner of the land, and the sale was attended by all the customary native ceremonies in presence of an assemblage of several of the tribes. After some time had elapsed, Kingi, another chief, at the head of the Wartura tribe, raised an objection as to Teira's right to dispose of the land. No notice was taken by Government of this protest, and for some months the affair seemed forgotten. Then orders were given to survey the newly acquired territory, and every argument was used to

convince Kingi that his interference was unjust to Teira, who had undoubted right to dispose of his own property. Kingi, however, refused to listen, and asserted that the *Mdori* would not suffer tracts of land to be given up to the English, and that they would resist further encroachments to the utmost. It was well known that three of the tribes had long entertained a wish for a native king, and this desire was an additional spur to their proceedings. The survey was attempted, but the native women congregated in such numbers on the spot, and so impeded the operations of the party, that they were compelled to retire without accomplishing their design. Martial law was then proclaimed, the militia called out, and, with the troops, marched from New Plymouth to take forcible possession of the disputed property — thus the war commenced.

The country about Taranaki or New Plymouth, Mr. T—— described to me as being very lovely, and the little capital a thriving town; but I was surprised to hear from him, that although the province contains nearly three millions of acres of land, we had not yet occupied nor obtained by purchase one fiftieth part, and that most of the settlers had established themselves in a ring of not more than ten or twelve miles distant from the little capital town. The *Maori* he described as born soldiers, with an ardent love for warlike exploits, and endowed with courage and physical powers of great

endurance. The total absence of game in New Zealand has denied to them the pleasures of the chase, and has doubtless been the cause of their belligerent propensities; the tameness of the lives they are forced to lead as farmers or fishermen, feeding on dog-fish, eels, and roots, cannot be very congenial to such temperaments as theirs are represented to be; therefore it cannot be a subject of surprise, that when they can no longer fight amongst themselves and devour each other, they should turn their thoughts to the destruction of the intruders on their lands.

Mr. T—— kindly sent me a parcel containing some New Zealand curiosities, to add to the collection which I was taking to England. Amongst them was a green stone, shaped like a half moon, which the natives prized highly; a chief's walking-stick richly carved, with the top representing the head of a fish with mother-of-pearl eyes; an apron of plaited flax ornamented with short reeds hanging as tags. The fish-hooks were extraordinary; they were made of bone, the sharp end of mother-of-pearl answering the purpose of bait, as the fish are attracted by its bright hues; they have different hooks and colours for bright and cloudy days.

I met some people I had known at home, who were here on a visit: they had settled near Christchurch, and although they were thriving, they expressed themselves disappointed in the climate, the nights being often as

intensely cold as the sun was hot during the day. The gentlemen talked much of the quantities of paradise ducks they shot, whose plumage is most brilliant, and the down quite equal to that of the Northern eider-down.

We had extended our stay in New Zealand beyond the bounds we had at first proposed, so reluctant were we to part from our friends who were so comfortably established in their beautiful home.

We were, at last, however, on our way back to Melbourne, and had a quick and agreeable passage. On our arrival we found that much anxiety was felt as to the result of the war in New Zealand; a large detachment of the 40th regiment had been sent to Taranaki, and, as usual in Melbourne, the most exaggerated reports were in circulation as to the management of affairs in that distracted portion of the island. It does seem so cruel to pass judgment on those who are risking their lives, and, what is more precious to them, their reputation, in directing or carrying out the plan of a warfare with savages from which no honour can be gained — too cruel to damp their ardour and zeal, when they must often in secret be depressed themselves with the sense of their responsibility and the difficulties of their position. Englishmen are proverbially brave,

but bravery alone is not sufficient to achieve great results; and civilians who accuse military men of *caution* would do well to remember that there is such a quality as discretion, and that our time-honoured proverb says it is the best part of valour. Is the anxiety not to hazard the lives of the soldiers unnecessarily no part of good generalship? What man fears to rush into a battle and bear in his own person the brunt of it?—but a good officer will pause ere he sacrifice his men needlessly. Let then those who, when writing at a comfortable table far away from the scene of action, dip their pens in gall, and plunge into a brave man's heart arrows whose wounds will rankle and fester there, although he knows they are undeserved, pause and consider whether their brilliantly written article is worth the pain it will cause; let them, in mind, place themselves in the position of the defamed, and see how they like it.

We had for some time taken our passage to England in one of the favourite clipper ships, and had delayed our return from New Zealand so long, that we were very much pressed for time, which was perhaps a comfort to us; for under the most favourable circumstances, it is a painful feeling to see a happy home dismantled, to part with those domestics who have served you faithfully, and to caress for the last time

the dumb animals, who can only express their love by their intelligent eyes looking into yours with a soft fond gaze. Tears fill my eyes, when I think of the leave-takings of all our dear dear Australian friends, whose kindness and love made our sojourn in Victoria one of unalloyed pleasure.

THE END.

LONDON
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.
NEW-STREET SQUARE

